

# *The Sacrificial System*



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## Table of Contents

Preface:		2
Chapter I:	Introduction to the Course	3
Chapter II:	The Ten Commandments	13
Chapter III:	The Tabernacle	25
Chapter IV:	Old Testament Sacrifices	33
Chapter V:	The Sabbath Observances	43
Chapter VI:	Levites and Priests	53
Chapter VII:	Holy Days and Festivals	60
Chapter VIII:	Sin and Forgiveness	72
Chapter IX:	Atonement, Remission, and Reconciliation	80
Chapter X:	Ransom and Redemption	89
Chapter XI:	Sexual Laws and the Sanctity of Marriage	93
Chapter XII:	Miscellaneous Laws	99
Chapter XIII:	The Purposes of the Law	105
Appendix A:	An Outline of the Law of Moses	112
Appendix B:	The Annual Calendar	133
Appendix C:	Chart of Weights and Measures	134
	Bibliography	135

## Preface

The study of the sacrificial system is thought by some to be a dull undertaking and a waste of time. It is, in fact, neither of these. Instead, it is a wonderfully challenging and interesting enterprise, which can give important insights into the meaning of our own relationship to God, the meaning of forgiveness, and the interaction of law, grace, faith, and justification.

When we look at the nations around Israel from the time of the conquest of Canaan until the Babylonian Exile, and probe the culture, religions, and values of those nations, we find many points of similarity as well as contrast between their religious traditions and those of ancient Israel. A better understanding of the background of those religions, the Law of Moses, and the sacrificial system help us grasp some of the complexities of Israel's history.

Nature formed the foundation of the religions of the nations of Canaan. One of the important tasks of the worshippers was to appease an angry god in order to obtain victory in war, productive crops, human fertility, and other personal desires. Their gods were not moral. They fought, killed, committed adultery, lied, and coveted. The result was that the worshippers embodied the values and behavior of the gods they worshipped.

In contrast, a strong component of the study of the sacrificial system is its emphasis on the holiness of God, and his love for his creation. He was not capricious, but was a God of justice, mercy, and love. He did not engage in selfish pursuits or fight unpredictable wars with opposing gods or goddesses. He was not just the controller of certain forces of nature; he was the sovereign of all. For Israel, he was the God of the Covenant. He loved righteousness and hated sin.

The study of the sacrificial system vividly displays these characteristics of God, but it also demonstrates his anger and severity when his people rebelled. Yet, his love and mercy prevailed, and he provided forgiveness.

In this study we will see the futility of trying to find justification by works of law – any law – as we are forced to come back to the gospel to find the solution to sin, man's ultimate problem.

Yes, there are some aspects of the Law which seem trivial and others which seem to be unchristian or unreasonable. This study is not designed to try to answer these difficulties, but to provide a basic acquaintance with the Law of Moses and the sacrificial system which became the discipline for Israel for more than a thousand years.

## Chapter I

### Introduction to the Course

Introduction:

1. The sacrificial system of the Old Testament is much broader than the simple offering of animals as burnt sacrifices. It actually encompassed the entire Law of Moses because each aspect of that Law had some reference to the Covenant, burnt offerings, worship, or the priesthood.
2. As we study the Law and the sacrificial system, it is important to remember that the Law reached into every aspect of the life of the Israelites, and there was a mutual interaction within the system. It linked community, morals and ethics, business practices, personal relationships, religious and ceremonial observances, economics, hygienic practices, political policies, family and sexual practices, military life, etc. to each other so that the system was an integrated whole. The sacrificial system was inseparably linked to these things, and cannot be understood without taking into account this interaction.
3. Israel was encamped at Mt. Sinai for approximately one year while the Law was being given to Moses.
4. The Law of Moses is basically divided into two sections: The Ten Commandments (Decalogue) and The Ceremonial or Levitical Law.
  - a. It should be noted that this is not a hard and fast division, because there were many moral laws in the Levitical section, as well as one ceremonial law in the Decalogue – the fourth commandment concerning observance of the Sabbath Day.
  - b. As will become evident later, the Levitical Law is further divided into a number of distinct sections.
5. We will look closely to the idea of covenant, and then we will briefly survey other topics to be covered in the course.

#### I. The Covenant and God's relationship to the people of Israel.

##### A. The idea of covenant.

1. The word is used in the Hebrew approximately 286 times in the Old Testament, but the idea is referred to many other times without the use of the word.
2. The Biblical idea is more than just a contract or agreement between parties as we see in the contemporary world.
3. Covenant, in the Bible, carries a sacred tone, although the word is also used to describe secular agreements between people.
4. The earliest use of the word carried the ancient idea of, "obligations sworn to by the religious community." (G.E. Mendenhall, Article "Covenant," *The In-*

*terpreter's Dictionary of the Bible*, vol. I, Abingdon Press, Nashville: 1962, p. 716.)

5. This was true in Israel and to a lesser degree in pagan countries as well.
6. Covenants of antiquity are found frequently in both the religious and secular realms, and they took on themselves certain distinct forms. Some of these forms are found in the Old Testament.

B. Some types of covenants found in both Biblical and Non-Biblical literature.

1. An inferior bound to a superior.
  - a. When one nation conquered another, sometimes the conquered nation would agree to serve the conqueror.
  - b. This is illustrated in I Sam. 11:1 where the people of Jabesh Gilead offered to serve Nahash the Ammonites after he conquered them.
  - c. There are numbers of such covenants in the Old Testament.
2. Covenants of parity.
  - a. This is where two or more parties mutually agree with each other to carry out certain obligations in return for specified benefits.
  - b. Gen. 31:44-50 is an illustration of this, where Jacob and Laban agreed that they would live in peace and that no harm would be done to Laban's daughters or children.
  - c. Abraham's covenant with Abimelech (Gen. 21:25-32) and Isaac's covenant with Abimelech (Gen. 26:27-31) are also examples of this type of covenant.
  - d. In the ancient secular-pagan world this type of covenant was sometimes witnessed to by a monument (heap of stones), or sacrifices to a god, or eating a meal together at the site of the covenant as was done by Jacob and Laban. Notice that a sacred element frequently (though not always) entered into these covenants.
  - e. There are many covenants of this type in the Old Testament.
  - f. Frequently the Old Testament condemns Israel for making this type of covenant with the nations around them. This is particularly evident when God instructed Israel not to make covenants (treaties) with the nations of Canaan when they entered the land.
3. The Call of Abraham – A Covenant which binds God.
  - a. These are important, and may, in some ways, be considered unilateral covenants.
  - b. Gen. 12:1-3, generally referred to as the "Call of Abraham," is a covenant in which God agreed to be bound to Abraham and his descendants, and in fact to the whole world.

- c. Notice that God instructs Abraham to leave his native land, and go to “the land I will show you.” This is the only condition God lays down in this covenant, but it is not stated as a specific condition of the covenant.
- d. God binds himself to Abraham in the following ways:
  - 1) Make of you a great nation.
  - 2) Bless you.
  - 3) Make your name great.
  - 4) You will be a blessing.
  - 5) Bless those who bless you.
  - 6) Curse those who curse you.
  - 7) Bless all people through you.
- 4. Old Testament history shows that God remained bound to this promise until it was fulfilled in Christ, in spite of the infidelity of Israel.
- 5. Gen. 15:1-21 gives the covenant promises which God made to Abram and the confirmation of the covenant.
  - a. God stated to Abram that he (God) was Abram’s protector. However, Abram was confused, because he had no heir, and his estate would go to his servant, Eliezer, a Syrian of Damascus. In this statement, Abram shows that he needs confirmation from God concerning just what God had in mind.
  - b. God assured him that Eliezer would not be heir to Abram’s estate, but that he (Abram) would be the father of a son.
  - c. It is at this point that the Scripture says, “Abram believed the Lord, and he credited it to him as righteousness.” Gen. 15:6.
  - d. It is interesting to note that, although Abram “believed God,” he still asked for some kind of confirmation in vs. 8.
  - e. A highly symbolic ceremony took place as Abram brought a heifer, a goat, a ram, a dove, and a young pigeon, and chased away birds of prey so that they could not devour the sacrifices. A blazing torch and smoking pot passed between the pieces which Abram had divided, “and the Lord made a covenant with Abram,” promising that his descendants would inherit the land.
    - 1) A similar, though not identical incident is found in Jeremiah 34:17-20 in which Jeremiah speaks of those who “walked between the pieces of the calf” but later violated the covenant, and would suffer the consequences.
    - 2) This seems to indicate that there was a connection between “walking between the pieces” and the formal acceptance of the covenant presented.
- 6. In Gen. 17:1-14 the Covenant of Circumcision is given, in which the former covenant is confirmed.

- a. In this covenant some of the promises of Gen. 12:1-3 and Gen. 15:1-21 are reiterated and enlarged.
- b. Circumcision was widely practiced among many nations of the Middle East, so this was not something with which Abram would have been unfamiliar. Some western Semites and Egyptians practiced it, while western Europeans were generally opposed to it. Note that later the Philistines, who came from Greece and Crete, were referred to as the uncircumcised.
- c. Beginning at this time, for the descendants of Abram, circumcision had an important significance, namely as a sign that they were God's chosen people.
  - 1) The Babylonian Exile caused the Jews to mix with other nations, and the rite of circumcision became even more significant to the Jews.
  - 2) In the Judaism of Jesus' day, circumcision was considered of primary importance. Much of Paul's writing reflects this. See Rom. 2:25-29 and Gal 5:2-6 as examples.

C. The covenant at Mt. Sinai. An ancient covenant form. Ex. 19-20.

- 1. There were various forms of contracts, wills, agreements, etc. in the ancient world, just as there are in our own day.
  - a. Many of these took shape after negotiations had produced mutual agreement.
  - b. God's covenant with Israel was not like this. It was not a product of negotiation and compromise. Instead, God gave the terms, and it was up to Israel to either accept or reject it. They accepted it.
- 2. The form of the covenant at Sinai was an established form of its day when a superior (perhaps a king or overlord) would dictate to an inferior (perhaps vassals or servants) the terms and conditions of the covenant. It was not an agreement between equals, but between a superior and inferior. This was somewhat similar, but not identical, to the covenant described in I-B-1 above.
- 3. The basic elements of this type of ancient covenant were:
  - a. A preamble. In this the creator of the covenant introduced and identified himself.
  - b. The historical prologue. In this the creator of the covenant described his past relationship with the other party, speaking particularly of his beneficence toward the other party.
  - c. The stipulations. In this part the superior party (creator of the covenant) laid out the obligations of the inferior party (the recipient of the covenant) to the creator of the covenant.
  - d. Blessings and rewards. This is the final part of this covenant form. The blessings and rewards which would come to the recipient of the covenant are stated here, provided he fulfilled its terms. Notice that there was no

negotiation involved in this type of covenant. The inferior party has only the power to accept or reject the covenant offered by the superior party.

4. The covenant at Mt. Sinai. See Exodus 19-20. Notice the comparison in form and general content with this type of ancient covenant. Notice also that the preamble is missing in Ex. 19, but is included in 20:2 as a preamble to the Ten Commandments.
  - a. Historical prologue: "You have seen what I did to Egypt." 19:4
  - b. Stipulations: "Obey me fully and keep my covenant." 19:5
  - c. Blessings: "Out of all nations, you will be my treasured possession . . . you will be for me a kingdom of priests and a holy nation." 19:5-6
  - d. Israel's response: "We will do everything the Lord has said." 19:8
  - e. The Ten Commandments follow, giving a broad basis for Israel's conduct.
5. The Levitical Law spells out Israel's complete obligations under the Covenant. It is sometime referred to as the "Book of the Covenant."

#### D. The meaning of covenant.

1. It gave basic meaning to the God-Man relationship within the context of the Hebrew nation.
2. In God's covenant with Israel, there was an interesting interaction between the religious, national, social, political, and economic life of the Hebrew people. The religion of Israel, its worship, sacrificial system, moral and ethical laws, hygienic laws and its ceremonies and rituals, were components of the covenant idea.
3. One of the problems in Israel's later history was that the covenant began to be thought of as mere symbolism rather than being seen as the dynamic force which bound Israel to God.
4. Many of the people zealously observed the religious practices addressed in the Law of Moses, but emphasis on the external forms of action replaced the spiritual essence of the observance. This led to the deepest kind of hypocrisy, insincerity, and pretense. The people lost sight of the original meaning and importance of these forms and ceremonies. Read the Minor Prophets, particularly Amos and Hosea, for a true picture of these conditions. Jesus addressed some of these principles in the Gospels. See Matt. 12:1-8, 15:1-11, and 23:1-32.

## II. Some elements of the sacrificial system.

#### A. Regulations common to all offerings.

1. Kinds of animals: bullocks, sheep, goats, doves, pigeons.
2. The one making the offering laid his hands on the animal's head.

3. The animal was then killed, and its blood sprinkled at a designated place such as the mercy seat, or it was poured out at the base of the altar.
4. The animal had to be without blemish, and not younger than 8 days.

B. Kinds of offerings.

1. Burnt offerings. Lev. 1:1-17
  - a. The animal was completely burned.
  - b. One lamb was offered in the morning and one in the evening every day. This was doubled on the Sabbath.
  - c. When the Bible speaks of the burnt offerings, this is usually what is being referred to, unless another type is specified.
  - d. This is the “continual burnt offering.”
  - e. Additional animals were offered on specified days, *e.g.* first day of each month.
  - f. The “continual burnt offering” consisted of not less than 954 animals per year, in addition to offerings by individuals, and offerings on special days.
2. Meal offerings and drink offerings. Lev. 2:1-16
  - a. Fine flour. No leaven or honey could be used, but it must have salt added.
  - b. Part of it was burned, part given to the priests.
  - c. A drink offering was an offering of wine, perhaps poured over the animal.
3. Peace offerings, also called the fellowship offering. Lev. 3:1-17, 7:11-21, 7:28-36
  - a. Primarily an offering of thanksgiving or accompanying a vow.
  - b. Sheep or goat, male or female.
  - c. All of the fat was burned, and the blood poured out at the base of the altar.
  - d. The animal was eaten by the one making the offering and his family or friends. This was a sort of feast.
  - e. Parts were given to the officiating priest.
4. Sin offering. Lev. 4:1—6:7, 6:24 – 7:10
  - a. All of the fat was burned on the altar, and the carcass was taken outside the camp and burned.
  - b. The kind and sex of animals offered varied with the person (ruler, priest, the whole nation, etc.), and sometimes the type of sin (unintentional, ignorance, sin against holy things, sin against neighbor, etc.).

III. Priests and Levites.

A. Priests.

1. Must be descendants of Aaron, of the tribe of Levi.
2. Priests wore specially designed clothing while officiating. Ex. 28:1-43
3. Financial and other types of support for the priests.
  - a. From the altar they received portions of meat or the meal offering. Num. 18:8-20
  - b. A tithe of the tithe was given to them.

B. Levites.

1. They were from the tribe of Levi.
2. They did not occupy a specified area in Canaan as the other tribes did, but occupied the suburbs of 48 assigned cities.
3. Their duties included certain tasks around the Tabernacle (setting it up, breaking it down for travel, caring for some of the holy things of the Tabernacle), serving the nation, and instructing in the Law. Later, during David's reign, they were assigned as singers and musicians. (See I Chron. 23).

IV. Holy Days and Feasts.

A. Passover. This was also known as the Feast of Unleavened Bread. Ex. 12:14-20, Lev. 23:4-15, Num. 9:1-14.

1. It was celebrated on the 14th day of Nisan (the first month) to commemorate the deliverance from Egypt. If a person was "unclean," or traveling he celebrated it one month later. An alien among them came under the same regulations.
2. This was one of the three annual events at which every male was required to be present. The other two were the Feast of Weeks (Pentecost in the New Testament), and the Feast of Tabernacles.
3. Each household celebrated the Passover with a meal of roasted lamb and bitter herbs. In addition to family sacrifices, 70 animals were offered for the nation.

B. Feast of Weeks. This was also called the Feast of Harvest. Lev. 23:15-21 In the New Testament this is Pentecost.

1. Celebrated 50 days after the Sabbath of the Passover – "the day after the seventh Sabbath." Therefore it always came on the first day of the week.
2. Special offerings were brought to celebrate the beginning of the harvest, and the first fruits were dedicated to God.
3. Ten extra animals were offered during this celebration.
4. All males were required to be present each year for this feast.

C. Day of Atonement. Lev. 16:1-34. This is referred to in Hebrews 9 – 10.

1. It was the only required day of fasting in the Old Testament Law.

2. A bullock and a ram were offered for the sins of the priest and his family and the blood, was sprinkled at the mercy seat (the covering of the Ark of the Covenant).
3. Two goats were selected, one of which was chosen to be sacrificed, and the other, the scapegoat (also called “Azazel,” meaning “removal”) was to be released in the wilderness.
  - a. The blood of the goat which was offered as sacrifice was taken into the Most Holy Place of the Tabernacle and sprinkled at the mercy seat.
  - b. The other goat was brought to the High Priest who laid his hands on its head and confessed the sins of the people. This goat was then led out into the wilderness and released.
  - c. The carcasses of the animals sacrificed were taken outside the camp and burned.
4. A total of 13 animals were offered on this day as special sacrifices.

D. Feast of Tabernacles. Also called the Feast of Ingathering. Lev. 23:33-44.

1. It was held at the end of the harvest as a festive occasion of celebration.
2. During the seven days of the feast, the people lived in booths (temporary dwellings) as a reminder of the hardships of the wilderness wanderings.
3. A total of 168 special sacrifices were offered during this feast. This was more than at any other event in the Hebrew year.
4. All males were required to be present each year for this feast.

E. Feast of Trumpets. Lev. 23:23-25.

1. Primarily a feast of joy.
2. It was a special day of solemn rest and sacrifice, celebrated by blowing trumpets, and offering ten special sacrifices.

F. Feast of New Moons. Nun. 28:11-15.

1. Very little is said about this feast, but it was observed each month.
2. There were 11 animals sacrificed each month during this feast, for a total of approximately 132 for the year (12 months).

V. Summary of the national offerings required annually:

A. Daily and Monthly Burnt Offering:	954
B. Passover:	70
C. Feast of Harvest (Pentecost):	10
D. Day of Atonement:	13
E. Feast of Tabernacles:	168
F. Feast of Trumpets:	10
G. Feast of New Moons:	132
<b>TOTAL ANNUAL OFFERINGS:</b>	<b>1,357</b>

VI. The Sabbaths.

A. Weekly. Ex. 20:8-11.

1. A day of rest.
2. The seventh day of the week.
3. No work allowed.

B. Sabbatical year. Lev. 25:1-8, Deut. 15:1-11

1. Every seventh year they had to let the land rest – it could not be cultivated.
2. The Law was read publicly.
3. All debts were canceled.
4. Israel had not observed the Sabbatical year regularly, and this was stated as one factor in the Babylonian Captivity. For 70 years the land would “enjoy its Sabbaths.” See I Chron. 36:21

C. Year of Jubilee. Lev. 25:8-55.

1. Declaration of the year of freedom.
2. Celebrated every 50th year.
3. All land went back to its original owners, and slaves were freed.
4. The land was not to be cultivated. God had promised especially abundant crops for the two years of cultivation prior to Jubilee so they would have ample food for the year of jubilee.

VI. Other provisions of the Law. There were about 12 of these.

- A. Ethical law.
- B. Civil law.
- C. Criminal law.
- D. Vows.
- E. Marriage, divorce, and sexual behavior.
- F. Idolatry and witchcraft.
- G. Food and health regulations.

- H. Slavery and servitude.
- I. Military and judicial regulations.
- J. Provisions for the poor.
- K. Laws of Inheritance.
- L. Ceremonial cleanliness.

Conclusion:

- 1. The Law of Moses had numerous regulations not noted in this outline. The difficulty of keeping the Law was recognized throughout the history of the Hebrew nation.
- 2. Romans 3:20. “Through the Law came a knowledge of sin.” Our knowledge of the Law of Moses points out the impossibility of bringing about a right relationship with God through our own goodness, for “all have sinned” Romans 3:23, and “the wages of sin is death” Romans 6:23. It is only through Christ’s atonement that forgiveness of sin is possible.
- 3. Although we do not live under the Law of Moses, it is essential to know its scope and some details in order to understand and appreciate the New Testament.

## Chapter II

### The Ten Commandments

Introduction:

1. The Ten Commandments form a sort of basis for the remainder of the Law of Moses. They are sometimes referred to as the Ten Words because in the original language, each of the commandments contains only two words.
2. They are referred to as the words of the covenant at Mt. Sinai, Ex. 34:28.
3. They are found in Exodus 20:1-17, and again in Deut. 5:6-21. Various single commandments are referred to at other places in both Old Testament and New Testament.
4. We will look at the individual commandments and note their particular significance for Israel and general application.

I. To whom was the Law of Moses given?

A. Ex. 19:1-6. God made the covenant with Israel.

1. Notice that the nation of Israel was the recipient of the covenant, and the Ten Commandments formed the basic conditions of conduct for them.
2. See the introductory lesson concerning types of covenants in ancient times.
3. The Ten Commandments as such are referred to as God's covenant with Israel. See Deut. 4:13 and 5:1-3. This however does not detract from the covenant with Abraham, which became the basis of God's promise to Israel.

B. The covenant with Israel was the next step toward fulfillment of God's promise to Abraham in Genesis 12.

1. The Law, including the Ten Commandments, was not given to the world as a whole, although it has been thought of as the basis of conduct for Christian people.
2. The first four commandments deal with man's relationship to God, and the last six deal with man's relationship to his fellows.
3. Catholics and Protestants have listed the commandments somewhat differently. Catholics and most Lutherans combine the commandments concerning foreign gods and images (Ex. 20:2-6), while non-Catholics separate them. The Catholic list counts the prohibition concerning coveting as two separate commandments. One is against coveting a neighbor's house and the next is against coveting a neighbor's wife, servants, animals, etc. Non-Catholics put these together as one commandment.

C. The background of the Ten Commandments.

1. While in Egypt, Israel was exposed to most of the violations of these commandments.
2. Just as the plagues in Egypt addressed many of the alleged powers of the Egyptian gods, so also the Ten Commandments addressed many of the theological and moral abuses of the paganism of Egypt and of the heathen world in general.

II. The commandment against worshipping other gods. Ex. 20:3

A. The preface to the first commandment.

1. “I am the Lord your God who brought you out of the land of Egypt.”
  - a. God declared himself to be the source of their deliverance from bondage. Therefore he has a moral, ethical, and theological claim on Israel.
  - b. This should also be seen in reference to the covenant as discussed earlier.
2. The plagues, along with this commandment directly attacked the pagan practices of the Egyptians, among whom Israel had lived for hundreds of years before the exodus.
3. The plagues were objective evidence of God’s power over the gods of Egypt, and were to serve as a remainder to Israel against all idolatry.
4. A number of miraculous events had already taken place to demonstrate the validity of God’s claim to be the only God.

B. The gods and goddesses of the surrounding nations.

1. The 1928-29 discovery and excavation of the Ras Shamra Tablets gave abundant information concerning the ancient Canaanite deities. The site of this discovery was the city of Ugarit, located on the northeastern coast of the Mediterranean Sea, directly east of the tip of Cyprus. These tablets are sometimes referred to as the Ugaritic texts.
2. The Canaanite gods and goddesses formed a family of deities, the head of which was El. Not very much is said about him, because he seems to have had little “contact” with humans.
  - a. El’s wife was Asherah who was the mother-goddess and the goddess of fertility, but she did not occupy this position exclusively.
  - b. During the Divided Kingdom period, Jezebel had 400 prophets of Baal and 450 prophets of Asherah at Mt. Carmel (I Kings 18:19).
  - c. The symbol of the presence of Asherah was a pole or a sacred tree. Sometimes the KJV speaks of this as a “grove.”
2. Baal was the prominent offspring of El and Asherah, either as a son or a grandson. Archaeological records are not completely clear on this.

- a. The name “Baal” simply meant “lord,” and could apply to a number of different gods in the Canaanite pantheon, although it is specifically applied to the offspring of El and Asherah.
- b. Baal was the god who supposedly controlled the rain, storms, lightening, vegetation, and human reproduction.
- c. The name of Baal was frequently attached to personal names, and also to the names of cities.

3. Anath was the sister and wife of Baal, and she was the goddess of war and love. She was similar to the Mesopotamian goddess Ashtoreth (I Sam. 31:10 and other references). Mot was the god of death, and the greatest enemy of Baal.

- a. Each fall when the rains ceased, the Canaanites attributed this to the idea that the god Mot, the god of death, had defeated and killed Baal, the god of rain and storms. This caused droughts and the death of vegetation.
- b. The return of later rains was believed to have taken place because Baal’s warrior wife (Anath) defeated Mot (death), and brought Baal back to life.
- c. Baal and Anath once again mate, and this brings the spring rains and the return of fertility to humans, animals, and vegetation.
- d. Thus, turning against Baal constituted a threat to the survival of civilization.

4. It is important to see how the idea of animal and plant fertility, sex, and human reproduction played an important role in Canaanite culture and religion.

- a. Since the gods and goddesses of the Canaanites supposedly controlled human and animal reproduction, they were considered necessary for the survival of humankind as well as food production.
- b. This also meant that there were no standards of sexual morality among the worshippers of Baal.
- c. The Israelites were easily drawn into these permissive pagan sexual practices.
- d. Among the Sidonians these gods and goddesses were important. Jezebel, the Sidonian wife of Ahab, was an ardent worshipper of Baal.
- e. In addition, child sacrifice, sacred prostitution, and snake worship were also parts of their cult.
- f. Many fertility rites were associated with the worship of Baal, Asherah, and Ashtoreth, and these became stumbling blocks to the Israelites while they were in Canaan.
- g. Similar gods and goddesses, with different names, were worshipped at various times from Babylon to Rome.
- h. With these things in mind, it is easy to see why God warned Israel not to make any treaties or agreements with the nations of Canaan, and not to intermarry with them. Violation of these warnings finally resulted in Israel’s downfall.

5. The first commandment had many very practical applications, and was a protection against violation of many other commandments.

### III. The commandment against the creation of images. Ex. 20:4-6

#### A. God is a spirit, not a physical being.

1. The desire to have a tangible object to represent or embody a god had been a problem with mankind from earliest times.
2. A practical problem of images is that they become substitutes for God rather than reminders of him.
  - a. These images took the form of humans, animals, reptiles, and other sacred objects.
  - b. Israel is unique among ancient nations in the prohibition of images.
  - c. By the time of Eli and Samuel, the Ark of the Covenant came to be thought of in much the same way as the pagan nations thought of images of their gods. In the eyes of many, the Ark seems to have become a sort of sacred charm rather than simply a representation of the presence of God. See I Sam. 4:1-9.

#### B. The images of heathen nations around Israel.

1. Various living creatures symbolized the pagan deities.
  - a. Cows, bulls, and calves.
  - b. Humans, human bodies with heads of birds or beasts.
  - c. Snakes, crocodiles, and beetles.
  - d. Sheep, lions, cats, and dogs.
  - e. Birds, warriors (both male and female).
  - f. Combinations of various birds, humans, and animals.
2. Many objects, though considered primarily as representations of their gods, were frequently thought of as having magical powers.
  - a. God told Elijah that there were seven thousand in Israel who had not bowed down to Baal nor kissed him. Kissing the image was a standard heathen practice because the worshippers thought this would bring luck or blessings.
  - b. In some Mesopotamian cultures the person possessing the family god was thought to have certain civil and inheritance rights.
  - c. Rachel's possession of the family god (teraphim, Gen. 31:19) may have implied this.
3. In addition, this commandment prohibited bowing down to an image. Warnings of punishment for violation of this commandment are also included.

IV. The commandment against taking God's name in vain. Ex. 20:7

A. What does this mean?

1. Invoking the name of a god was thought by heathens to give additional power to their words or deeds.
2. The name of God was invoked as an oath, attesting to the truthfulness or binding power of a statement.
3. This emphasizes the high degree of respect God demanded concerning his name.

B. Ancient use of a divine name.

1. The name of God, or a god, was important to the ancient people.
  - a. Jacob asked the name of the "man" with whom he wrestled, because the "man" was believed to be a representative of God." See Gen. 32:22-32.
  - b. Moses at the burning bush asked about the name of God. See Ex. 3:13-14.
  - c. To know and call the name of God was also of great importance in Israel.
  - d. God said he would make his name dwell among the Israelites. Ex. 20:24.
  - e. Israel was not to swear falsely by God's name. Lev. 19:12.
2. The magic use of the name of a god.
  - a. The pagans used the name of their gods as a means of invoking a magic spell, for good or evil, on a person or situation.
  - b. The prohibition against taking the name of God in vain means that God's name is not to be lightly or falsely used, but is to be held in the greatest reverence.

V. Commandment concerning the Sabbath. Ex. 20:8-11

A. The origin of the Sabbath as a commandment.

1. The word in both Hebrew and Greek primarily means the termination or end, speaking particularly of the end of the week.
  - a. Since the applied meaning, both in Hebrew and Greek, is that of rest or inactivity, the word "Sabbath" came to mean "rest." Some scholars however believe that the word was not defined as "rest" until post Biblical times.
  - b. The expression "Christian Sabbath" applied to Sunday is a misnomer. Sunday is the first day of the week, which is in contradiction to the Biblical idea of Sabbath. The Sabbath was (is) always the seventh day. Scripture never applies this word to the first day of the week.

2. Most religions, ancient and modern, have observed one day each week as a day of rest from work.
  - a. Some scholars speculate that those non-Biblical observances constituted the true origin of the Biblical Sabbath.
  - b. The Hebrew Sabbath was not just a day of rest, but was to be a day of remembrance and reflection as well. This was not characteristic of pagan religions which designated a certain day simply as one of rest.

B. The earliest observance of the Sabbath.

1. Gen. 2:2-3. After creation, God rested on the seventh day and sanctified it. However, it was not until the exodus from Egypt that any kind of observance was commanded.
2. Ex. 16:23-30. Here the observance of the Sabbath is mentioned for the first time in Scripture, and it is obvious that such observance was new to Israel.
  - a. In this passage Moses had told Israel that there would be no manna on the Sabbath, and they were instructed to gather twice the normal amount on the day before (Friday).
  - b. This passage speaks of some who went out to gather manna in spite of Moses' statement, but they found none. Moses rebuked them for this.
3. Ex. 20:8-11. In the Exodus account of the Ten Commandments, we are taken back to creation as the basis for observing the Sabbath.
  - a. In Ex. 34:21 the statement is made that even during plowing and harvest times, the Sabbath rest was to be observed.
  - c. Num 15:32-36. A man was found gathering wood on the Sabbath, and was confined because no penalty for violation had yet been revealed.
  - d. Moses was told that the man was to be stoned to death. This is the first violation of the Sabbath recorded in the Old Testament.
4. Deut. 5:15. In this passage observance of the Sabbath is also linked to Israel's exodus from Egypt, and the Sabbath was to be a reminder of this event.
5. Additional study of the Sabbath years, Year of Jubilee, and some New Testament attitudes will be discussed in a future lesson.

VI. The commandment concerning children and parents.

A. The family is the fundamental unit of society.

1. At this point there is a change in the emphasis of the Decalogue.
  - a. We now turn to relationships which human beings have to each other.

- b. Notice that these principles are not simply left up to mankind, but God is involved in regulating these relationships.
- c. The commandment to honor father and mother is followed by the promise of longevity.
- d. Ex. 21:15-17, Lev. 20:9, and Prov. 30:17 show the seriousness of violating this commandment.

B. Throughout the Bible, the importance and solidarity of the family is upheld.

- 1. The family is God's own institution, and he regulates it. See Matt. 15:4.
- 2. In Matt. 15:1-9 Jesus applied this commandment to children's obligation to care for aging parents.
  - a. It is unfortunate that society, more and more, turns this obligation over to state institutions.
  - b. This, in western countries, has been the cause of many social ills.
- 3. The practical nature of this commandment is that it will consistently give order to society, and teach children to respect others.

## VII. The commandment against murder.

A. The meaning of the commandment.

- 1. This commandment does not address the problem of capital punishment, war, or self-defense, but it is a commandment against murder – the intent to kill in cold blood as a matter of vengeance or anger.
- 2. In Gen. 9:1-6 God gives mankind the right to eat both animals and vegetation.
  - a. God states that man is responsible for his fellows, and that "I will demand an accounting for the life of his fellow man." Gen. 9:5
  - b. He further states that those who shed the blood of another man, his blood will be shed by his fellow man. Gen. 9:6

B. This commandment in the Decalogue is an injunction against murder, not against capital punishment.

- 1. This commandment is not designed to take away the obligations to punish an offender, even to the point of taking his life.
- 2. The Law of Moses said, "You shall not commit murder," but the Law also made provisions for various crimes to be punished by death.
  - a. Num 35:22-28 deals with one who accidentally kills another person. He can flee to a city of refuge where he will be protected from the avenger of blood. He is to remain in that city until the death of the High Priest.

- b. Num. 35:31 says a murderer shall be put to death.
- c. The death penalty is prescribed for a number of different kinds of crimes, some of which are sexual crimes. Lev. 20:10-16.
- d. Frequently the Law of Moses makes provisions for capital punishment, but specific prohibitions are given against killing for vengeance.
- e. Num. 35:31-33 says, “Bloodshed pollutes the land, and atonement cannot be made for the land on which blood has been shed except by the blood of the one who shed it.”

3. Ex. 21:28-31. This provides that if a bull gores a man and he dies, the bull must be stoned to death. However, if the bull has a habit of goring, and the owner did not keep him penned up, the owner is responsible, and is to be stoned to death. Provisions were made for him to redeem his life under certain circumstances.

4. See Matt. 5:21-26, Rom. 12:17-21, and Rom. 13:1-5 concerning the true meaning of this commandment, and the obligation of the civil government to “bear the sword.”

5. The basis of the commandment seems to be that man is the only creature God created in his own image.

- a. Gen. 9:4-6. Note that God gave man permission to eat the flesh of animals, but specifically reserved mankind apart.
- b. The statement of Jesus in the Sermon on the Mount also emphasizes respect for man. See Matt. 5:21-26.
- c. Ex. 21:12-14 and other passages give a fuller explanation of this commandment showing the difference between premeditated killing and accidental killing.

6. Prohibition against murder was not common in many ancient cultures, because human life was not held in such high regard as it was in Israel.

- a. In Hebrew law, a man could kill a thief who broke into his house at night, but not after sunrise (Ex. 22:1-2).
- b. Babylonian law allowed the householder to kill the thief who had broken into the house, whether day or night.

## VIII. The commandment against adultery.

A. The general scope of this commandment.

- 1. Specifically, it forbids sexual relationships between two people, at least one of whom was married to someone else.
- 2. Lev. 18 describes, and forbids a very wide range of sexual activities and perversions.
- 3. This commandment specifically guards the sanctity of the family.
- 4. The true intent of this commandment is expressed by Jesus in Matt. 5:27-30.

5. The word adultery is frequently used in the Old Testament to describe Israel's infidelity to God, as are also the words prostitute and prostitution. See Jer. 7:9, 23:10, etc.
6. The penalty for violation was death for both parties. Deut. 22:22.

B. Sexual practices among the pagan nations.

1. In ancient times sexual permissiveness and perversions were generally accepted among the both Middle Eastern and Western nations.
2. Because of fertility cults and the gods and goddesses representing such cults, promiscuous sexual activities of all sorts were not only permitted, but became parts of the religious practices of pagan nations.
  - a. Among many of the Mesopotamian nations there were annual fertility rituals sometimes involving public sexual practices between kings and priestesses of the cults.
  - b. Cult prostitution became a serious problem within Israel as Baalism and worship of other pagan gods and goddesses infiltrated the nation.
  - c. The thought in paganism was that the prostitution cult performed an important function in restoring fertility to the earth, and keeping the cycle of seedtime and harvest alive.
  - d. In the shrines, the practice of human sexual intercourse was supposedly designed to encourage the gods and goddesses to do likewise, in order to rejuvenate the reproductive effectiveness of humans, animals, and agricultural products.
  - e. As stated above, in Canaan and the surrounding nations, Baal, Asherah, and Ashtoreth were especially prominent. The Babylonian goddess who was the equivalent of Asherah was named Ishtar.
  - f. The Ishtar Gate was the main gate leading into the city of Babylon and down the Processional Way. It was here that the annual Babylonian cultic fertility rites were celebrated.
3. During the divided kingdom period, male prostitution also was part of the fertility ritual celebrated even in Israel. See I Kings 14:22-24, 15:11-12.
4. The data above show a stark contrast between the strict behavior God required in the Law of Moses and the permissiveness of the worshippers of Baal and Asherah, and the importance of the prohibitions of the Ten Commandments in this regard.

IX. The commandment against theft.

A. The sanctity of private property.

1. The right for human beings to own property, real or personal, is protected in this commandment.

2. The underlying principle is that, “I have the moral right to possess that for which I have worked, and no one has the right to take it from me without my consent.”
3. Ex. 22:1-15 demonstrates some of the laws concerning the protection of one’s property from thieves or intruders.

B. Penalties for theft.

1. Penalties varied, depending on what was stolen and the circumstances of the theft.
2. Lev. 6:1-7. Part of this process of redemption was the restitution of the property, plus a penalty or fine paid to the injured party. A trespass (guilt) offering was also required when restitution was made by the thief.
3. Note the severity of some of the penalties invoked, but the life of the thief is not generally threatened.
4. Babylonian and Assyrian laws were quite different in this regard. Under those laws, if the thief could not pay his fine, he could be put to death.

X. The commandment against false witness and lying.

A. The wording of this commandment shows that it is primarily addressing the importance of truth in the judicial system. However, it implies the basic sacredness of truth and integrity.

1. The sacredness of truth in all dealings is found frequently in the Law of Moses.
2. In the civil and criminal portions of the Mosaic Law there are numbers of similarities with the Code of Hammurabi, the Babylonian king who ruled from 1728 to 1686 B.C. According to the Code of Hammurabi one who was discovered giving false testimony against another person was punished by inflicting on him (the falsifier) the punishment for the crime of which he had falsely accused the other person.

B. The idea of personal integrity is upheld throughout the Bible.

1. Lev. 19:35-36, Ps. 15:2, 51:6, 52:3. All of these, and many others, extol the principle of sincerity of heart, or speaking truth in one’s heart, and being honest in one’s business dealings.
2. The importance of loving truth is spoken of in the New Testament, and severe consequences come from God for those who do not love truth. II Thess. 2:10.

XI. The commandment against coveting.

A. The basic meaning of the commandment.

1. The word translated “house” generally refers to a “family” or “household” although there is not necessarily such a limitation here.
2. The commandment extends to your neighbor’s wife, his servants, and his animals, concluding with the all inclusive phrase, “or anything that belongs to your neighbor.”

B. Definition of coveting.

1. The word covet is often thought of as the very strong desire to have something which belongs to another person, with the willingness to do something wrong in order to obtain it.
  - a. Although this is covetousness, the word is far more inclusive than that.
  - b. Its basic meaning in both Hebrew and Greek is “greed,” or “excessive urge or longing for something.”
2. In Ex. 20:17 the Septuagint Version of the Old Testament, the LXX, uses the Greek word **επιθυμεω** (*epithumeo*) to translate the Hebrew word for covet.
  - a. This Greek word means to have a very strong desire for something, and it is the word which is commonly translated by the English word “lust.”
  - b. The word itself is not moral or ethical, but such meaning comes from the context in which it is used.
  - c. Jesus used this word in Lk. 22:15 when he said, “I have **eagerly desired** to eat this Passover with you.” In this statement, Jesus expresses a wholesome strong desire to eat the Passover with his disciples. Notice how the context determines its moral or ethical meaning.
  - d. Very often however the context in which the word is used depicts a situation in which a person strongly desires something to the point of “lust” or “greed,” or greedily tries to obtain something to which he has no right of possession.
3. Below are some additional references where the Greek word **επιθυμεω** (*epithumeo*) is used in a high moral-ethical sense:
  - a. Mt. 13:17. “Righteous men **longed** to see what you see, but did not see it.”
  - b. Lk. 16:21. Concerning the rich man and Lazarus it was said that Lazarus was “**longing** to eat what fell from the rich man’s table.”
  - c. I Tim. 3:1. “If anyone sets his heart on being an overseer, he **desires** a noble task.”
  - d. I Pet. 1:12. “Even angels **long** to look into these things.”
4. With this in mind, this commandment says, “You shall not **strongly desire** to possess your neighbor’s family, his wife, his servants, his animals, or anything which belongs to your neighbor.”

5. We see then that this commandment deals profoundly with one's attitude toward possessions, whether referring to family relationships or material things.

Conclusion:

- a. The Ten Commandments form a sort of theological, moral, and ethical basis for much of the Levitical Law.
- b. Violation of these commandments brought very heavy penalties.
- c. Many of the Ten Commandments are directly related to the immorality and religious perversions of the nations which Israel was commanded to drive out of Canaan. Instead of doing so, they made treaties with many of them, and, as God had warned through Moses and Joshua, those nations became “snares and traps for you, whips on your backs and thorns in your eyes until you perish from this good land which the Lord your God has given you.” See Num. 33:55-56, Josh. 23:12-13.

## Chapter III

### The Tabernacle

Introduction:

1. The word “Tabernacle” means a tent or temporary dwelling place. The Tabernacle described in Exodus was the center of Israelite sacrifice, and observance of rituals on holy days.
2. The Tabernacle was in the center of the camp, and the twelve tribes were located in specified sections around it.
3. There is no history of the Tabernacle after the destruction of the city of Shiloh where it was located.
4. The expression “Tent of Meeting” is used to refer to two different structures.
  - a. It frequently refers to a small tent erected outside the camp where Moses went to commune with God. See Ex. 33:7-11. (This took place prior to the erection of the Tabernacle.)
  - b. In Num. 9:15 the Tabernacle is referred to as the “Tabernacle of Testimony.”
  - c. Ex. 40 speaks of the erecting of the Tabernacle, and the various events which took place at that time. Ex. 17-33 uses the expressions “Tabernacle” and “Tent of Meeting” interchangeably.
5. The materials for the Tabernacle were voluntarily contributed by the people. See Ex. 25:1-7.

#### I. A brief description of the Tabernacle and its furnishings.

- A. While on Mt. Sinai, Moses received the plans for its design. See the accompanying diagram.
  1. Ex. 25:1-9. This is the beginning of the plans for the Tabernacle. This is the first time the word appears in the English translation of the Old Testament.
    - a. In verses 8-9 Moses is warned to make the Tabernacle exactly according to the pattern he was shown.
    - b. This statement is referred to in Heb. 8:5.
  2. Voluntary gifts of gold, silver, bronze, fabrics, animal skins, linen, goat's hair, oil, fragrant incense, onyx and other stones were made by the people. Various other materials were also used such as acacia wood, dye, leather, etc.

#### B. The general layout of the Tabernacle. See accompanying sketch.

1. It consisted of an outer courtyard with its furnishings, and a small enclosure inside this courtyard. This enclosure was made up of two compartments.

- a. The first was called the Holy Place.
  - b. The second was called the Most Holy Place, or the Holy of Holies.
- 2. The outer courtyard with its furnishings. Ex. 25-27 and Ex. 38.
  - a. The Old Testament gives the measurements in cubits. The outer courtyard was 100 cu. X 50 cu. Considering a cubit to have been approximately 18 inches, this means that the courtyard was 150' X 75'. Metric measurements were 45.72 m. X 22.86 m.
  - b. The furnishings of the outer courtyard.
    - 1) The brazen altar of burnt offerings. 7'6" X 7'6" X 4'6". Metric measurements were 2.32 m. X 2.32 m. X 1.4 m.
    - 2) On this altar the animals were offered as sacrifices.
    - 3) The brazen laver. The Old Testament does not give the measurements of the laver. Ceremonial washings of various sorts took place here.
- 3. The entrance to the courtyard faced eastward, and was 20 cu. across, 30', or 6.1 m. The entrance was covered with specified coverings
- 4. The various tribes were assigned places around the courtyard as their camp area. See Num. 2-3 for a full description of this.
  - a. On the east, the tribes of Judah, Issachar, and Zebulun were to set up their camp.
  - b. On the south, the tribes of Reuben, Simeon, and Gad were to set up their camp.
  - c. On the west, the tribes of Ephraim, Manasseh, and Benjamin were to set up their camp.
  - d. On the north, the tribes of Dan, Asher, and Naphtali were to set up their camp.
- 5. The Levites were not assigned a particular area, but were dispersed among the other tribes.
  - a. Three of sons of Levi were Gershon, Kohath, and Merari, and the descendants of each of these formed families or clans.
    - 1) Each family had specific duties assigned to them concerning the care and moving of the Tabernacle.
    - 2) The Gershonites encamped on the west side of the Tabernacle.
    - 3) The Kohathites encamped on the south side of the Tabernacle.
    - 4) The Merarites encamped on the north side of the Tabernacle.
    - 5) Moses and Aaron and their sons encamped on the east side of the Tabernacle.

b. Numbers 4 tell of the basic duties of the Gershonites, the Kohathites, and the Merarites.

C. The Tabernacle proper.

1. It consisted of a small tent structure measuring 30 cu. X 10cu. X 10cu. This was 45' X 15' X 15', or 13.72 m. X 4.57 m. X 4.57 m. See Ex. 26:15-37 and 36:20-38.
2. It was divided into two compartments separated by a veil or curtain. The first compartment was called the Holy Place, sometimes referred to as the Sanctuary (Ex. 38-39), and the second compartment was the Most Holy Place or Holy of Holies.
3. The Holy Place or Sanctuary. It measured 20 cu. X 10 cu. X 10 cu. This was 30' X 15' X 15', or 9.14 m. X 4.57 m. X 4.57 m.
  - a. There were three items of furniture in the Holy Place. See Ex. 25:10-40 and Ex. 37:1-29.
    - 1) The Golden Lamp Stand. Ex. 25:31-40. This was located on the south side in the Tabernacle, or on the left as one enters the Holy Place. This lamp stand is now referred to as the Menorah. However, the present day Menorah has nine branches instead of seven.
      - a) It was made of pure gold. No dimensions are given for it.
      - b) It had three branches on each side and one in the middle, seven altogether.
      - c) The cups on tops of the branches contained oil and wicks. They were shaped like almond flowers and blossoms.
      - d) The oil was replenished regularly, and the lamps were always kept burning.
    - 2) The Table of the Presence. Ex. 25:23-30. In some translations this is referred to as the Table of Show Bread. It was located on the north side of the Holy Place, or on the right side as one would enter.
      - a) The table was made of acacia wood, and covered with gold. It had a gold molding around the rim.
      - b) It measured 2cu. X 1 cu. X 1.5 cu. This would be 3' X 1'6" X 2'3" or .914 m. X .457 m. X .686 m.
      - c) On the table were plates, dishes, bowls, and a pitcher.
      - d) Each Sabbath, 12 fresh loaves of bread were placed on the table. They remained until the following Sabbath when they were replaced. The priests then ate the loaves which had been removed.

3) The Altar of Incense. Ex. 37:25-29. It was located just in front of the veil which separated the Holy Place from the Most Holy Place. See Ex. 37:10-16.

- a) It was made of Acacia wood, and covered with gold, and had a gold molding around the rim.
- b) It measured 1 cu. X 1 cu. X 2 cu. This would be 1'6" X 1'6" X 3' or .457 m. X .457 m. X .914 m.
- c) It was here that the incense was burned every morning and at various other times as prescribed.
- d) See Heb. 9:3

b. The priests went in and out of the Holy Place regularly, performing the various services prescribed by the Law.

4. The Most Holy Place. Ex. 26:31-34

- a. It was a perfect cube, measuring 10 cu. X 10 cu. X 10 cu. This would be 15' X 15' X 15' or 4.57 m. X 4.57 m. X 4.57 m.
- b. It was separated from the Holy Place by an elaborately embroidered veil or curtain.
- c. Only the High Priest was allowed to go into the Most Holy Place, and then only on the Day of Atonement.
- d. Furniture in the Most Holy Place.

1) The Ark of the Covenant. This was the only item of furniture in the Most Holy Place.

- a) It was made of Acacia wood and covered with gold. It also had a golden crown molding around the rim.
- b) The dimensions were 2.5 cu X 1.5 cu. X 1.5 cu. This would be 3'9" X 2'3" X 2'3" or 1.14 m. X .686 m. X .686 m.
- c) It was placed behind the curtain.

2) The cover of the Ark was referred to as the Mercy Seat, or Atonement Cover. On the cover were two cherubim facing each other with their wings folded forward. Both the Atonement Cover and the cherubim were to be made of pure gold, formed as one piece. See Ex. 25:17-22.

5. The Ark of the Covenant represented the presence of God, and on the Day of Atonement was the place where the High Priest sprinkled the blood of the sacrificed goat.

- a. At various times certain items were specified to go into the Ark of the Covenant. At first, only the tablets of stone were placed in it.

- b. Later the Book of the Law, Aaron's rod which budded, and a pot of manna were also placed into the Ark. At first the Book of the Law was placed beside the ark, but later was placed in it. See Deut. 31:26, I Kings 8:9, and Heb. 9:4.

D. Transporting the Tabernacle.

1. Num. 10 tells of the beginning of Israel's journey from Mount Sinai toward the Promised Land.
2. The line of march was specified, and the Levites and priests carried the various furniture and other parts of the Tabernacle.
3. The various items of furniture had gold rings on their four corners, and poles of Acacia wood overlaid with gold were inserted into these rings, and the item was carried on the shoulders of the appointed people.
  - a. The Levites attended to various duties at the Tabernacle. Whenever the nation moved, the Levites were to disassemble it, transport it, and reassemble it at the destination. See Num. 1:47-53.
  - b. The specific groups of Levites previously described had assigned duties concerning the transporting of the Tabernacle. See Num. 3:14-37.
  - c. In Num. 4 there are specific instructions concerning preparation and transport of some of the items of which the Kohathites, the Gershonites, and Merarites were to take charge.
  - d. The priests were to transport the Ark of the Covenant.

II. A brief look at the history of the Tabernacle.

- A. The last chapter of Exodus tells us that the Tabernacle was erected and dedicated at Mount Sinai.
  1. It was erected on the first day of the first month of the second year of the exodus from Egypt. This was about nine months after their arrival at Mt. Sinai.
  2. As we have seen, the entire structure, including the courtyard was rather small.
  3. Notice that this was not considered a general meeting place for all of Israel to gather for community worship, but the place of sacrifice and the celebration of ceremonies on holy days.
  4. Ceremonial anointings took place for various items of furniture and for Aaron and his priestly sons.
- B. The Old Testament gives us very little information concerning the history of the Tabernacle after its completion in Exodus 40.
  1. Various ceremonies of dedication were carried out.
  2. Num. 10:11 says that on the twentieth day of the second month of the second year, approximately one month and twenty days after setting up the Tabernacle

le, Israel left Mt. Sinai on their journey toward Kadesh-barnea. The Tabernacle was dismantled at that time, and carried by the Levites as assigned. See Num. 10:11-34.

3. The book of Numbers tells of the forty years wanderings. In that book the Tabernacle is frequently spoken of as the Tent of Meeting.

### C. The Tabernacle at Shiloh.

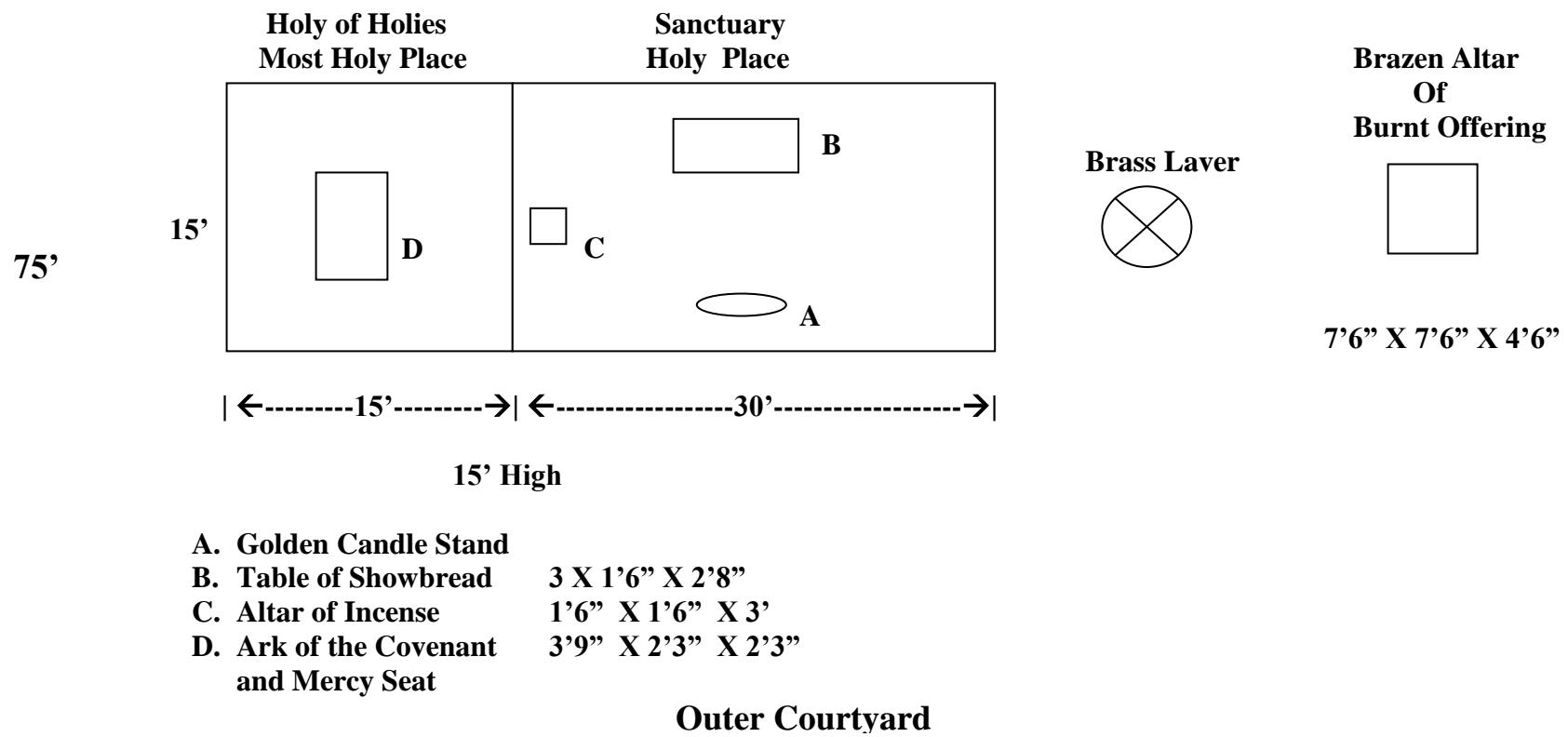
1. In Josh. 18:1 we are told that the Tent of Meeting was set up at Shiloh, a small city about 20 miles (32.2 km.) north of Jerusalem. We must remember that in the books of Exodus, Leviticus, and Numbers the Tabernacle is frequently called the Tent of Meeting.
2. In I Sam. 1:1-3, Elkanah and Hannah went to Shiloh to worship and offer sacrifices. In the 1:9 Eli is spoken of as sitting near the Lord's temple where Hannah had been praying. Although this is called the Lord's temple, there is little doubt that it is referring to the Tabernacle.
3. It seems that the Tabernacle remained in Shiloh until the city was destroyed by the Philistines.
  - a. In I Sam. 4:1-11 we have the account of the Philistine defeating Israel at the two battles at Aphek.
  - b. After the first defeat, Israel sent men to Shiloh to get the Ark of God and carry it into battle. The ark was captured by the Philistines. This took place about 1050 B.C.
  - c. The Bible is silent in reference to any other activities at Shiloh or the Tabernacle.
4. Archaeological discoveries have shown that the city of Shiloh was violently destroyed at about this time. (See G. E. Wright, *The Westminster Historical Atlas to the Bible*, p. 46.)
  - a. It is noteworthy that when the Ark finally came back into Israelite possession it was not returned to Shiloh, but to the house of Abinadab in Kiriath Jearim where it remained for twenty years. (I Sam. 7:1-2)
  - b. The prophet Jeremiah calls attention to the fact that the Tabernacle had been in Shiloh, but God had destroyed the city because of Israel's wickedness. It was there, Jeremiah says, that God "first made a dwelling for my name." See Jer. 7:12-14 and Jer. 26:6.
5. David intended to bring the ark from the house of Abinadab to Jerusalem, but it was taken to the house of Obed Edom instead. Three months later David had it brought to Jerusalem.
  - a. During the reign of David, the Tabernacle seems to have been set up at the city of Nob, about 4 miles north of Jerusalem.

- b. David and his men were escaping from Saul, and went to Nob where Ahimelech the priest gave them the consecrated bread to eat. This, no doubt, is the bread which was in the Holy Place of the Tabernacle. See I Sam. 21:1-11 and Matt. 12:1-4.
- 6. When Solomon was beginning to build the temple, various items from the Tabernacle were brought up to him.
  - a. Solomon summoned the elders of Israel and heads of the tribes to bring up the ark from Zion to the City of David. See I Kgs. 8:1-5.
  - b. All of these things seem to indicate that in some way, certain items of the Tabernacle had been recovered from the destruction of Shiloh, and there was a continuation of their use until Solomon built the temple in Jerusalem.

Conclusion:

- 1. The Tabernacle was replaced by Solomon's temple. The dimensions of the sanctuary were enlarged, and the whole layout was embellished.
- 2. In the New Testament the writer of Hebrews uses the Tabernacle and the Day of Atonement as figures or shadows of the atoning sacrifice of Jesus. See Heb. 9-10.

150'



## THE TABERNACLE

## **Chapter IV** **Old Testament Sacrifices**

Introduction:

1. From Israel's earliest history until the destruction of Jerusalem and the second temple in A.D. 70, sacrifices were a dominant theme of Hebrew religious practices.
2. The practice of offering some sort of burnt sacrifice has been carried out since the time of Cain and Abel.
3. A connection between sin, sacrifice, and the approval of the gods is seen in the earliest histories of many cultures, yet its origin is not clear.
4. Anthropologists have found what they believe is evidence of such sacrifices as far back as the Stone Age.
5. It is important that we remember that the sacrificial system among the Israelites was never perceived as a substitute for obedience to God.
  - a. See I Sam. 15:22-23 where Samuel tells Saul, "To obey is better than sacrifice."
  - b. It was not a license to sin nor was it given with the idea that one could commit a sin, go offer a sacrifice, and thus be forgiven (high handed sins).
6. Our study will look briefly at pagan practices, and trace Biblical sacrifices and regulations from the days of Cain and Abel through those prescribed under the Law of Moses.

### I. A brief look at pagan sacrificial practices.

- A. There was a mixture of religion, magic, demons, and divination among the pagan nations.
  1. The whole idea of magic, as shown in pagan polytheism, originated from a non-logical view of life and the world.
  2. This meant that various mysterious and inexplicable forces supposedly controlled nature and the fate of mankind.
    - a. Idols and objects were not considered simply the representations of the gods, but were, in fact, the gods themselves, at least in part.
    - b. It was thought that through magical spells, these objects (and consequently the gods) could be manipulated or, to some degree, controlled.
  3. The name of the deity was of utmost importance in the thinking of ancient people. To invoke the god by name was thought to be especially effective.

- a. This sorcery was practiced extensively among the Canaanites who occupied the Promised Land just prior to Israel's entrance into the Land.
- b. These rituals particularly involved the gods El (the father god) and Baal (his most notable offspring).

4. The sacrificial system of the pagans was tied to the importance of "feeding" the god through the sacrifice, and thus invoking his favor. We might also notice that the worshipper, by withholding his "feeding" sacrifice, could perceivably make the god somewhat dependant on him, and might use this to manipulate the god. (See G.E. Wright, *The Old Testament Against its Environment*, pp. 104-105.)
5. In Paul's speech on Mars Hill, he affirmed that God did not need anything which man could supply. This was in direct opposition to basic polytheistic beliefs and practices. See Acts. 17:24-25.

#### B. The Law of Moses and magic.

1. Such magical arts, as practiced among the pagan nations of Canaan, were strictly forbidden among the Israelites.
2. For regulations against magic, sorcerers, mediums, etc. see Ex. 22:18, Lev. 19:31, 20:6, 27.
3. The warnings of Deut. 18:9-15 bear directly on the dangers of these things eventually coming into Israel's religious conduct.

Let no one be found among you who sacrifices his son or daughter in the fire, who practices divination or sorcery, interprets omens, engages in witchcraft, or casts spells, or who is a medium or spiritist or who consults the dead. Anyone who does these things is detestable to the Lord, and because of these detestable practices the Lord your God will drive out those nations before you. You must be blameless before the Lord your God. The nations you will dispossess listen to those who practice sorcery or divination. But as for you, the Lord your God has not permitted you to do so. Deut. 18:10-14.

#### C. The prophets also spoke against these practices.

1. Isaiah reproves those who tell the Hebrews to consult mediums, spiritualists, etc. Is. 8:19-22
2. Manasseh, king of Judah, even offered human sacrifices. He is also condemned for his devotion to these magical practices. II Chron. 33:6
3. In order to see the importance of God's directives against such activities, we must understand their prevalence among the nations in and around Canaan at the time Israel entered the Land.
4. By contrast, the sacrificial system of Israel carried an entirely different message.

- a. The pagan religions had little or no moral dimension to them. This is seen in strong contrast to Israel.
- b. This was because the basis of Israel's sacrificial system was completely different from the basis of the pagan systems.
  - 1) However, Israel fell victim to the practices of the heathen nations, and followed their evil ways.
  - 2) There were some aspects of those pagan practices which were very "attractive" to Israel.
    - a) Some of these had to do with their fertility cults, and sexual immorality and perversion.
    - b) Others had to do with magical spells as described above.
- c. While the pagan sacrifices were designed to manipulate the gods, appease their anger, or to "feed" them, Israel's sacrificial system was designed as a response to the holiness of God, to express gratitude, etc. See below.

#### D. A brief look at the purpose of Israel's sacrificial system.

- 1. It was a response to the holiness of God.
- 2. It was a response to the blessings God had provided to Israel.
- 3. It was in response to man's guilt, and God's willingness to forgive.
- 4. It was man's desire to express his gratitude to God for his blessings.
- 5. It was atonement for sin. (We must remember that polytheism did not have an adequate concept of sin which could be comparable to that of Israel.)
- 6. It was an acknowledgment of Israel's relationship to God.
- 7. While paganism had a "confession of guilt," it was not connected to a sense of a break in a loving relationship with the god. Instead, this confession was primarily to appease the anger of the god.
- 8. Israel's sacrificial system was an expression of covenant with God.
- 9. In Israel, sacrifices were never to become a substitute for righteous living. An unrighteous life meant an unrighteous sacrifice. See Ps. 51, Prov. 28:9, Is. 1:10-17, Amos 5:21-24, etc.

## II. A brief look at the history of sacrifices in the Old Testament.

#### A. Gen. 4:1-14. Cain and Abel.

- 1. The first mention of any kind of sacrifice is the offerings of Cain and Abel in Gen. 4.
- 2. No information is given concerning any details of these offerings except that Cain offered the produce of the field, and Abel offered the firstling of the flock along with the fat.

- a. Notice that the offering which Abel brought was accompanied by the fat. Later, under the Levitical Law, God states that the fat is to be offered to him.
- b. Over fifty times in the Law Israel is told to burn the fat in their sacrifices.
- c. Cain's offering was not stated as the first fruits, or even the best of the produce, but simply that he "brought some of the fruits of the soil."

3. God responds with approval for Abel's offering, but with displeasure for Cain's offering.

- a. No reason is given for this. See Heb. 11:4 where the writer says that Abel's offering was one of faith. However, it is not clear just what the writer has in mind here.
- b. We do not know any of the criteria which Cain might have violated. Various theories have been presented to explain this, but none are satisfactory. Some of these theories are:
  - 1) God showed his eternal election of Abel over Cain.
  - 2) God only wanted an animal sacrifice, and the shedding of blood.
  - 3) God saw that Cain's motive was impure, while Abel's was pure.
  - 4) God saw the difference in the quality of their offerings.

B. Noah's offering after the flood. Gen. 8: 20-21

- 1. He took some of the clean animals and birds and sacrificed them on an altar.
- a. The specifications for clean and unclean animals are not given until Leviticus 11, so we do not know what criteria Noah might have followed.
- b. This is the first time that an altar is specifically mentioned in the Bible, although the sacrifices of Cain and Abel may have implied some sort of altar.
- c. After the flood, God made a promise that the world would not again be destroyed by a flood.

2. We have no information concerning what should be offered in sacrifice or other details of what God might have required of Noah or others.

C. The Patriarchs.

- 1. Job, who apparently lived during the Patriarchal Age, offered sacrifices to God, but no information is given concerning the regulations for these sacrifices.
- 2. Beginning with Abraham, Genesis gives us an almost continual history of Patriarchal sacrifices, although we know little or nothing of the regulations concerning the animals or other specifications for the offerings.

3. In Ex. 5:3 Moses appeared before Pharaoh to request that the Israelites be allowed to go into the desert to offer sacrifices to God. From this we see that offering sacrifices to God may have been regularly practiced by the Israelites while they were in Egypt.
4. Up until the time that Moses received the Law, the exact specifications for sacrifices were not given.

### III. The general law of sacrifices under the Mosaic Law. (Also, see Appendix A.)

#### A. Regulations which were generally common to most animal offerings. (Ex. 20:24; Lev. 1:5,10,14,15; 3:1,2; 4:3, 4, 6, 7, 13-15; 17:1-9, 22:17-28)

1. Animals offered—oxen, cows, lambs, sheep, goats, doves and pigeons.
2. Condition of the animal: Each animal had to be without blemish, perfect, and not younger than 8 days.
3. The one making the offering usually laid his hand on the head of the animal. (Lev. 1:3-6; 3:1, 2; 4:3, 13-15)
4. The blood was to be sprinkled at designated places or poured out at the base of the altar. (Lev. 1:5, 15; 4:5, 6, 7)
5. The perfection of Christ is typified in the perfection of the animals. (Heb. 9:14; 1 Pet. 1:18-19).
6. Burning the fat of the animal was almost always a part of the regulation.

#### B. Where Sacrifices were to be offered. (Ex. 20:25, Lev. 17:1-9, Deut. 12:4-7)

1. Before the erection of the Tabernacle offerings were made on an altar of earth at a place appointed by God. (Ex. 20:24)
2. After the erection of the Tabernacle, offerings were to be made at the door of the Tabernacle on the Brazen Altar. (Lev. 17:1-9)
3. When Israel settled in Canaan offerings were to be made at the door of the Tabernacle, or later at the Temple. (Deut. 12:1-15)
  - a. There are some difficulties concerning this since there were many sacrifices offered by God's representatives (prophets, etc.) at places other than at the Tent of Meeting, or Tabernacle.
  - b. Some examples of this are:
    - 1) Moses instructed Joshua to build an altar to God at Mt. Ebal when that part of Canaan was conquered. See Deut. 27:1-8. (It should be noted however that this took place in Josh. 8, but it was not until Josh. 18 that the Tabernacle was set up after the capture of Shiloh.)
    - 2) Gideon: "So Gideon built an altar to the Lord there and called it 'The Lord is Peace.' To this day it stands in Ophrah of Abiezrites." Judges 6:24.
    - 3) Jephthah: Judges 11:31.
    - 4) Manoah: Judges 13:16.

- 5) Samuel: I Samuel 16:5
- 6) David: I Samuel 20:6.
4. After the city of Shiloh was destroyed by the Philistines, the location of sacrifices became somewhat decentralized, as seen in I Samuel 7:7-9. However, some of the above examples show that sacrifices were made by godly men at places other than the Tabernacle, even while the Tabernacle was located in Shiloh.
  - a. This is an admitted difficulty, but we do not seem to have enough historical information to offer a valid explanation. We must remember that some of the Old Testament writers refer to a number of sources of information which they recognized as reliable, but are not found in the Old Testament canon. Some of these are:
    - 1) “The Book of Jeshar” (referred to in II Sam. 1:18).
    - 2) “The Book of the Annals of Solomon” (referred to in I Kings 11:41).
    - 3) “The Book of the Annals of the Kings of Israel” (referred to in I Kings 14:19).
    - 4) “The Book of the Annals of the Kings of Judah” (referred to in I Kings 15:7).
  - b. Answers to some of the difficulties cited above may have been available to the ancient Israelites, but are not now available to us.
5. The decentralization of the sacrificial system continued until the building of Solomon’s temple, at which time sacrifices seem to have been offered primarily at the temple.

#### IV. Various kinds of offerings. (Ex. 29:38-42; Lev. 1:1—6:13; 6:19-30; 7:121, 28-38; Num. 15:1-11; 28:11-15)

- A. The burnt offering. This offering was completely burned, and was for the purpose of atonement (Ex. 29:38-42; Lev. 1:1-17; 6:8-13; Num. 28:1-13)
  1. This was a daily national offering, but was also required of individuals in conjunction with specified situations. For individuals, the following regulations were to be observed for the burnt offering.
    - a. The sacrifice may be taken from the herd or flock, or from a specified type of fowl.
    - b. The offeror laid hands on the head of the animal.
    - c. The animal was cut and burned completely.
  2. As a national offering the following specifications were given.

- a. A lamb was offered every morning and evening.
- b. These offerings were doubled on the Sabbath. In addition, on the first day of each month two bullocks, one lamb, and seven male lambs a year old were added. On certain holy days the burnt offerings were augmented. A meal and drink offering for each animal was also added.

3. The burnt offering sometime accompanied various other offerings.
4. The fire on the altar of burnt offerings was not allowed to go out. See Lev. 6:8-13.

B. Meal offering. (Lev. 2:1-16)

1. The articles of the offering: fine flour, oil, frankincense and salt. No leaven or honey. This was a cereal offering.
2. Meal offerings accompanied most other types of offerings.
3. Disposal of the offering: Part was burned and part was given to the priests.
4. When was a meal offering presented? (Num. 15:1-11). To accompany the burnt offering, vows and freewill offering or set feasts.
5. The meal offering could be used as a substitute for the poor if they could not afford two doves and two young pigeons for the sin offering.

C. Peace Offering. Since the meat of this offering was eaten by the offeror and his family and friends, it is referred to in the NIV as the fellowship offering. (Lev. 3:1-17; 7:11-21, 28, 34)

1. This offering was one of gratitude, expressing close fellowship between the offeror and God, and the offeror with family and friends.
2. It could be a voluntary or freewill offering, but was also required on certain occasions as part of a larger ritual such as the Feast of Weeks (Lev. 23:19) or at the end of a Nazarite vow (Num. 6:18).
3. The animal could be either male or female, from the herd or flock. The fat from various organs was to be removed and burned.
4. The meat was eaten by the person making the offering, his family, and friends. The fore-shoulder was given to Aaron and his sons, and the hindquarter was given to the officiating priest.
5. It must be eaten on the same day as offered except in the case of vows and freewill offerings. These were eaten on the first and second day. No unclean person could eat of it.
6. Occasions of peace offerings.
  - a. Thanksgiving to God. (Lev. 7:12-21)
  - b. Vow or free will offering.

D. The sin offering. (Lev. 4:1 --- 5:13, 6:24-30, Num. 15:22-31)

1. This was not offered for just any sin, but for unintentional sins and sins committed in ignorance or unknowingly. When a person committed a sin of which he was not aware and he did not intend it at the time but it afterward became known, the sin offering law applied. See Lev. 4:1-35.
2. In addition, Lev. 5:1-13 specifies other situations where the sin offering is required.
3. Different regulations were given for certain people and groups or circumstances. These differences are specified for priests, the whole congregation, the common people, a ruler, one who unintentionally touched a dead body, purification of a leper, purification after childbirth, and other persons of situations.
  - a. For sins of ignorance the anointed priest offered a bullock. The whole congregation offered a young bullock. A ruler offered a male goat. The common people offered a female goat or lamb.
  - b. If a person was too poor, he could bring one turtledove or pigeon or 3 1/3 quarts (1/10 of an ephah) of fine flour. (See Appendix C.)
4. All the fat was burned. If blood was sprinkled in the Holy Place, all the animal had to be burned, but if the blood was sprinkled on the brazen altar, the flesh was given to the offering priest. Whatever touched the offering was holy.
5. If the sin was against holy things, the sin offering, with its fines etc., was offered to God. If the sin was against a neighbor's property, the property must be restored fully and 1/5 of its value added along with an offering to God.

E. The guilt or trespass offering. (Lev. 5:14—6:7, 7:1-10)

1. This was for individuals who commit unintentional sins, much like the sin offering. However it had some additional and very different specifications.
  - a. The guilt offering generally deals with unintentional violations concerning the holy things. Lev. 5:17 expands this by saying, "If a person sins and does what is forbidden in any of the Lord's commands, even though he does not know it, he is guilty." Notice then that these are still in the category of "unintentional sin."
  - b. The offender was to bring to the priest, a ram plus the proper value of the animal in silver. In addition, he was to pay a fine of 1/5 of the value of his animal. This fine was given to the priest.
2. If his offense was against the property of his neighbor, and he had deceived or cheated his neighbor, or found lost property and lied about it, he had to make restitution in full, plus 1/5 of the value to be paid to the offended neighbor.
3. The offender also had to offer sacrifice as stated above and give it to the priest.

F. Summary: The general purposes of the offerings.

1. Sin offering--to atone for sins committed unintentionally or unknowingly.
2. Burnt offering--for consecration.
3. Peace offering--for harmony and peace.
4. Meal offering--special occasions, and it frequently accompanied other offerings.

## V. Meal or grain offerings and drink offerings.

- A. Meal or grain offerings. Depending on the translation, both of these words are used to describe this offering.
  1. **Lev. 2:1-16.** This passage gives the general requirements for the meal or grain offering. Num. 7 and 29 give various instances of the use of both grain offerings and drink offerings.
  2. The passage in Leviticus speaks of requirements for the grain offerings under a variety of circumstances.
    - a. The requirement stated here are rather general in nature. Some of these are fine flour, oil, incense, a handful of flour, etc.
    - b. If it was cooked in a pan some of the requirements were slightly different.
    - c. All grain offerings were to be prepared without yeast or honey, but they were to contain salt which was referred to as “the salt of the covenant.”
      - a. There is no explanation of just what is meant by the expression “salt of the covenant.”
      - b. It is generally thought that this may have come from an ancient custom that men who “share their salt” had a close fellowship with each other, and that fellowship was considered sacred. This may have originated because of the preservative character of salt.
  3. Num. 28. This chapter gives more specific requirements for the meal offering than the passage in Leviticus. Some of these requirements are:
    - a. One-tenth of an ephah of fine flour, one quarter of a hin of olive oil.
    - b. There were variations of this, depending on the particular offering it was to accompany, or the day on which it was offered.
    - c. For the American or metric equivalents of the capacities, see Appendix C the “Chart of Weights and Measures.”

## B. The drink offering.

1. The exact use of this offering is not specified, but it was to accompany many of the offerings. It is usually listed with the grain offering.
  - a. It usually consisted of a quarter or half hin of wine.
  - b. For examples of its use, see Num 15, 28, 29.

2. The drink offering was to be poured out over the animal as a libation.

Conclusion:

1. This lesson does not cover all of the requirements and regulations for all of the sacrifices required under the Law of Moses. These are given so that students can get an overall view of the basic requirements under the Law.
2. There was a great deal of overlapping in the sacrifices. Depending on what the offense or occasion might have been, sometime combinations of sacrifices were required. This was especially true for special celebrations or holy days.

## **Chapter V**

### **The Sabbath Observances**

Introduction:

1. Observance of the Sabbath was very important to Israel in both the Old Testament and the New.
  - a. After the Babylonian Exile, the Sabbath played a much more important role among the Jews, and there arose various traditions which defined many practices related to it.
  - b. These traditions are contained in the Mishna, a collection of oral laws and traditional interpretations of various commandments in the Law, primarily formulated by ancient scribes and rabbis.
  - c. These traditions were collected over a period of about two centuries and handed down from generation to generation. According to some scholars, the collection may have begun as early as the time of Ezra (c. 450 B.C.). During the days of Jesus, they were still in oral form, and it was not until about A.D. 200 that they took written form in the Mishna.
  - d. These were the traditions against which Jesus spoke so frequently in the Synoptic Gospels.
2. This lesson will be divided as follows:
  - a. The origin of a day of rest among pagan nations and the Biblical Sabbath in Israel. The influence of other nations.
    - 1) Cultural borrowing.
    - 2) Studies of comparative religions.
    - 3) The tie between the theory of organic evolution and theories of social and religious evolution.
  - b. Sabbath observance after Moses.
  - c. The Sabbath and the Babylonian Exile.
  - d. The Sabbath during the Intertestamental Period.
  - e. Sabbath year and the Year of Jubilee.

#### **I. The origin of the Sabbath.**

- A. The origin of the Sabbath, and some of the practices of the pagan nations of the Middle East.
  1. Liberal scholarship believes that many parts of the Law of Moses came as a result of the influence of pagan nations surrounding Israel.

- a. This included most of the ceremonial laws and some of the moral laws as well.
  - b. It is true that the Babylonians, Assyrians, Canaanites, and other surrounding nations offered sacrifices, observed holy days, had priesthoods, had civil and religious laws, etc., some of which were similar to those of Israel.
2. The Code of Hammurabi is an example.
  - a. Hammurabi was king of Babylon from about 1728 – 1686 B.C.
  - b. This Code was widely observed throughout Mesopotamia during the days of the three great patriarchs, Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, and there are many similarities between the Code of Hammurabi and the Law of Moses, particularly in regard to the civil laws.

B. Cultural borrowing.

1. Cultural borrowing takes place when adjacent cultures begin to adopt some of the religious, political and social practices of each other. In addition there is frequent adoption of cultural values, laws, linguistics, and traditions of each other as a part of cultural borrowing. This comes because of the normal exchanges and commerce between these adjacent nations and cultures.
2. Sometimes, however, even though certain nations or cultures are not adjacent to each other, they may have strong commercial ties and exchanges. In such cases they also tend to engage in culture borrowing.
3. This was an interesting phenomenon in Israel's history in the Promised Land, and it addresses at least one reason God told Israel to drive out the inhabitants and not to make any treaties with them.
  - a. For the most part, the nation which has the stronger, more restrictive laws is usually the nation which does the borrowing, while the nation with the more permissive practices is the one whose practices are acquired by its neighbor.
  - b. Since Israel's laws were very restrictive in reference to monotheism, family, sexual morals, justice, etc., it tended to borrow the practices of the more permissive pagan nations around it. The nations around Israel did not borrow from Israel because of the more restrictive elements of Hebrew culture, religion, values, and traditions.
4. Since a day of rest was practiced in Babylonia, and many of the surrounding pagan nations, some liberal scholars have concluded that Israel's practice of a day of rest originated with the Babylonians. This would be cultural borrowing.
5. Other liberal scholars have concluded that the Sabbath originated in a strongly agricultural environment, meaning that the Israelite Sabbath did not really originate at Mt. Sinai, but came after Israel occupied the land of Canaan.

6. The principle of cultural borrowing certainly impacted Israel's practice of its religion, but it does not necessitate the conclusion that the Law of Moses came into existence or was primarily the result of this phenomenon.

C. Studies in comparative religions.

1. Another phenomenon which liberal scholars believe impacted the religious practice of the people of Israel, and regulations of the Law of Moses, is the study of comparative religions.
  - a. These studies demonstrate that almost all religions have certain fundamental practices, beliefs, and ceremonies in common, and the relatively minor variations from one religion to another may not be very significant.
  - b. In that type of study they see that a day of rest, various sacrifices, the position of priests, etc. are common to all religions, including Israel, and that each religion casts these items into its own pattern.
2. The very existence of a variety of religions demonstrates the fact that there will be many similarities between them. However, this does not warrant the conclusion that they all have a common origin or dependence. Adherence to this principle basically denies the doctrine of divine revelation.

D. The theory of organic evolution and theories of religious and social evolution.

1. The theory of organic evolution basically says that simple organisms evolved, over millions of years, into more complex organisms, and ultimately into human beings.
  - a. This principle has been applied to many social, cultural, and religious practices of the world.
  - b. Without doubt, religious practices go through change and "evolve" into more complex practices. However, this does not answer the most pressing questions of revealed religion, namely that God has the power and the desire to communicate his will to his people.
2. The theory of organic evolution has been used by liberal scholarship to "explain" almost every practice in the religious world whether pagan, Judaic, or Christian.
3. The liberal scholars' general concept of God's activity makes it very difficult for them to believe in objective divine revelation to mankind. Therefore the belief in a theory of religious evolution is one of their most important components in trying to understand the practices of any religious structure.

E. Creation.

1. Gen. 1:1—2:3 gives us the story of the six days of creation, and states that on the seventh day God rested, and he “blessed the seventh day and made it holy.”
2. He did not, at creation, tell mankind that this was to be a day of rest for his people.

F. The beginning of Sabbath observance.

1. There is no Biblical evidence concerning any Sabbath observance or regulations prior to Exodus 16:23 when Moses told the Israelites to gather an extra amount of manna on the sixth day, Friday, because there would be none on the Sabbath.
  - a. “This is what the LORD commanded: ‘Tomorrow is to be a day of rest, a holy Sabbath to the LORD. So bake what you want to bake and boil what you want to boil. Save whatever is left and keep it until morning.’” Ex. 16:23.
  - b. It is obvious that they were not familiar with the Sabbath because Moses had to explain it to them.
  - c. When a man violated the Sabbath by gathering wood (Num. 15:32-36), the writer specifically says that up until that time it was not clear what should be done with a violator. God then revealed the penalty to Moses.
2. The fourth commandment in the Decalogue is to remember the Sabbath day and keep it holy. Ex. 20:8-11.
  - a. The commandment prohibited any kind of work being done on the Sabbath, by sons, daughters, servants, aliens, etc. among the Israelites. It included farm animals as well.
  - b. Allowances were made for emergencies. See Matt. 12:1-13.
  - c. In the Mishna (c. A.D. 200) there is the statement of a tradition which says that a man is guilty of violating the Sabbath if, on the Sabbath day he “takes ears of grain equal to a lamb’s mouth full.” (The Mishna, Sabbath 7:4, quoted in *The Interpreter’s Bible*, vol. 7, p. 391.) This is the type of tradition which Jesus so strongly opposed.
  - d. Sabbath practices in contemporary Judaism can be found on the internet at a variety of sites. One of these is:
 

<http://www.jewishvirtuallibrary.org/jsource/Judaism/shabbat.html>.

    - a. For instance, driving a car on the Sabbath is not allowed among the strictest observers of the traditions, because that constitutes lighting a fire (running the engine) and traveling more than a Sabbath Day’s journey.
    - b. Other objections are also given. See also the home page of the above site for additional items.

3. In the Old Testament the observance of the Sabbath is tied to two events, both of which were very important in the history of Israel.
  - a. Ex. 20:9. The observance is tied to the fact that God created the world in six days, and rested on the seventh.
  - b. Deut. 5:15. Here the observance is tied to the fact that God delivered Israel out of bondage, and the Sabbath was to be a weekly reminder of this.
  - c. Notice the emphasis which the Law of Moses places on remembrance, not only in reference to the Sabbath, but many other observances and ceremonies as well.

## II. The Sabbath after Moses.

- A. Relatively little is said about the Sabbath through the history of Israel from Joshua through Esther.
  1. The exceptions to this are, for the most part, found in conjunction with other celebrations and holy days, or where there is severe condemnations for violating the Sabbath as seen in Isaiah 1:13 and Amos 8:5
  2. The word “Sabbath” does not appear in the history section of the Old Testament from the end of Deuteronomy until II Kings 4:23. This comes during the early reign of King Ahaziah of Israel while Elisha was the prophet.
    - a. Even though the event described in II Kings 4:23 contains only an incidental mention of the Sabbath, it shows that there was regular observance of the day during Ahaziah’s reign.
    - b. Isaiah and Amos show that Israel was still observing the day, but they did so begrudgingly.
  3. After mentioning the Sabbath in II Kings 4:23, it is mentioned over twenty times through the history section of the Old Testament, half of which are found in the book of Nehemiah alone.
    - a. The Babylonian Exile had a profound affect on the Jews concerning their attention to the Law and ceremony.
    - b. From Isaiah through Amos the Sabbath is mentioned thirty-two times, beginning with Is. 1:13, and concluding with Amos 8:5. Thirty of these are found in Isaiah, Jeremiah, and Ezekiel, and one each in Amos and Hosea. Interestingly, none of the prophets after Amos, including the post-exilic prophets, mention it at all.
    - c. Amos 8:5 pictures the people of his day not thinking of the Sabbath as a day of remembrance, but simply wishing it would soon be over so they could go back to business of making money. This fits very well into the teaching of Amos against the empty ceremonial view which Israel had developed concerning many aspects of the Law.

- d. Is. 1:13 shows a similar situation. Israel's religion had become nothing more than a shell, with little spiritual substance.
- 4. God was highly displeased with their ceremonial celebrations, holy days, Sabbaths, and sacrifices because there was no justice for the poor, no care for the needy, and no compassion in their hearts.
  - a. Instead, there were bribes, dishonest business dealings, abuse of the less fortunate, and corruption in the courts.
  - b. The observance of the Sabbath had lost its meaning, and was really worthless as a "religious rite."

#### B. The Babylonian Exile and the Sabbath.

- 1. The comparatively frequent mention of the Sabbath in Nehemiah (fourteen times) shows that during the Exile a new reverence for the Sabbath had developed and it found expression among the Jews who returned to Jerusalem. Nehemiah demanded observance of the Sabbath, no buying or selling, no work, etc., and he locked the city gates on the Sabbath. See Neh. 13:15-22.
  - a. Archaeologists have uncovered documents from the Elephantine Colony in Egypt, which show the Jews' reverence for Sabbath observance during and after the Exile, even among those who did not return to Jerusalem.
  - b. Just prior to the Exile Jeremiah attaches a very strong importance to observing the Sabbath, and warns the people of the consequences of failure to do so. He says that such profanation will result in their city being burned. See Jer. 17:19-27. Ezekiel gives similar warnings in Ezek. 20:11-26.
  - c. II Chron. 36:20-21 says that while the Jews were captives in Babylon, the land would be enjoying its Sabbath rest. Perhaps this means that the Jews had failed to observe the yearly Sabbaths, not allowing the land to rest, and this was involved in God's allowing Babylon to conquer Judah.
- 2. The conditions and warnings found in these passages set the stage for the development of a different attitude of the Jews toward Sabbath observance during the Post-Exilic period.

#### C. The Sabbath during the Intertestamental Period.

- 1. The history of the Jews from the close of Malachi until the opening of the New Testament shows a strong and growing reverence for the Sabbath.
- 2. The synagogue probably came into being during this period, although its exact time and place of origin are not known. The Synagogue brought with it a localized place of Sabbath observance, study, and worship, although there were no sacrifices offered at the Synagogues.

3. Also during this period most of the Sabbath traditions arose among the Jews. These traditions gave rise to many conflicts which Jesus had with his countrymen.
4. The books of I and II Maccabees (Apocrypha) give important information concerning some of the practices of the Jews through this period.
  - a. During the early part of the Maccabean Revolt, some in the Jewish army would not fight against their enemies (the Syrians) on the Sabbath, but this practice changed when the Syrians began to take advantage of the Jews.
  - b. This was the general time period when the sect of the Pharisee arose.
  - c. Many of the great principles of the Law were lost when traditions, arbitrary definitions, and restrictions arose concerning various ceremonial observances. These were particularly evident as they related to the Sabbath. For example, "What is the real definition of work?" The traditions defined 39 classes of activities which were prohibited on the Sabbath, some of which we would consider trite and meaningless.
  - d. These traditional definitions and restrictions were at their height during the time of Jesus, and Jesus' supposed "violation" of the traditions surrounding the Sabbath became a major conflict with many of the Pharisees.
5. The Sabbath had become an end in itself instead of serving its original purpose.
6. "The Sabbath was made for man, not man for the Sabbath" was Jesus' condemnation of these legalistic traditional interpretations. Mk. 2:27-28 and Matt. 12:1-8.
7. The definition of "work" became an important controversy among the Jews, and the list below shows ancient (and contemporary) views of work.

The thirty-nine activities listed below are "definitions" of work, and are prohibited on the Sabbath. This list is from The American-Israeli Cooperative Enterprise. See

<http://www.jewishvirtuallibrary.org/jsource/Judaism/shabbat.html>.

1. Sowing	15. Dyeing wool
2. Plowing	16. Spinning
3. Reaping	17. Weaving
4. Binding sheaves	18. Making two loops
5. Threshing	19. Weaving two threads
6. Winnowing	20. Separating two threads
7. Selecting	21. Tying
8. Grinding	22. Untying
9. Sifting	23. Sewing two stitches
10. Kneading	24. Tearing
11. Baking	25. Trapping
12. Shearing wool	26. Slaughtering
13. Washing wool	27. Flaying
14. Beating wool	28. Salting meat

29. Curing hide	36. Extinguishing a fire
30. Scraping hide	37. Kindling a fire
31. Cutting hide up	38. Hitting with a hammer
32. Writing two letters	39. Taking an object from the
33. Erasing two letters	private domain to the public,
34. Building	or transporting an object in
35. Tearing a building down	the public domain.

(From: *Mishnah* “Shabbat,” 7:2)

Many of the above categories need explanations, and those explanations further define what is and is not permissible on the Sabbath.

The following is a quotation taken from the essay from which the list was copied. This is a recognized source of Orthodox Jewish information.

All of these tasks are prohibited, as well as any task that operates by the same principle or has the same purpose. In addition, the rabbis have prohibited coming into contact with any implement that could be used for one of the above purposes (for example, you may not touch a hammer or a pencil), travel, buying and selling, and other weekday tasks that would interfere with the spirit of Shabbat. The use of electricity is prohibited because it serves the same function as fire or some of the other prohibitions, or because it is technically considered to be "fire."

The issue of the use of an automobile on Shabbat, so often argued by non-observant Jews, is not really an issue at all for observant Jews. The automobile is powered by an internal combustion engine, which operates by burning gasoline and oil, a clear violation of the *Torah* prohibition against kindling a fire. In addition, the movement of the car would constitute transporting an object in the public domain, another violation of a *Torah* prohibition, and in all likelihood the car would be used to travel a distance greater than that permitted by rabbinical prohibitions. For all these reasons, and many more, the use of an automobile on Shabbat is clearly not permitted.

As with almost all of the commandments, all of these Shabbat restrictions can be violated if necessary to save a life.

8. Definition of a Sabbath Day's Journey.
  - a. This was not a part of the Law of Moses, but it came to be observed rather strictly during the Intertestamental Period.
  - b. It assumed that the Sabbath law included restriction on travel, but no definition of distance was given. Therefore, during the time when the traditions were arising, a distance was assigned by the rabbis to determine how

far a Jew could travel on the Sabbath day, and this was referred to as a “Sabbath day’s journey.”

- c. This distance was set at 2,000 cubits from one’s house or domicile, or about 1,000 to 1,200 yards. In metric measurements this would be 914 m. to 1097 m.
  - 1) The 2,000 cubits was based on the statement in Num. 35:1-5 which defined the pastureland for the Levites in their city suburbs.
  - 2) Various methods arose for circumventing this tradition. For example, prior to the Sabbath, a person could go the distance of a Sabbath Day’s journey, deposit food at that site, and declare it to be his temporary home. On the Sabbath day he could go from his actual home to his new site, eat the food, and go another “Sabbath Day’s journey” from there.
  - 3) Others interpreted the tradition to mean that the city where a person lived was his “home,” and he could travel anywhere within that city, and/or 1,200 yards outside of the city.
  - 4) The Sabbath day’s journey (or walk) is mentioned only once in the New Testament, Acts 1:12.

### III. Various Sabbath commandments.

#### A. The weekly Sabbath.

- 1. This is the most widely known Sabbath.
- 2. It was the seventh day of the week, always Saturday.
- 3. It was a day of rest and secession from all work. It allowed the people to rest, and gave the animals a chance to rest also. Ex. 23:12
- 4. In the Bible, the first day of the week is never designated as a Sabbath, and it is not a “Christian Sabbath” as it is frequently called.
- 5. Some believe that the Pope changed the Sabbath from Saturday to Sunday. This is not true.

#### B. The Sabbatical Year.

- 1. Every seventh year, the land was to have its rest. Nothing could be planted, pruned, or cultivated.
- 2. The people were not allowed to reap a harvest, but they could eat what grew of itself. The poor and wild animals could also gather or eat the food. Ex. 23:10-11, Lev. 25:1-7.
- 3. All debts were cancelled. Deut. 15:2
- 4. In the Apocryphal book of I Maccabees 6:49-53 a record of the Jews observing the Sabbatical Year is shown. This took place in about 167 B.C. during the time of Judas Maccabeus. The Syrian king, Antiochus IV (Epiphanes) dominated Israel at that time.

5. Josephus says that the Julius Caesar, the Roman Emperor, exempted the Jews from taxation during the Sabbatical year. This exemption was cancelled after the Jewish revolt in A.D. 70.

C. The Year of Jubilee. See Lev. 25:6-55.

1. This came once every fifty years, and was declared “the year of liberty.”
2. The people could not sow a crop, or reap a harvest even of what grew of itself. However, they could gather enough to eat what grew of itself.
3. Property reverted to its original family ownership.
  - a. If any property had been sold, it had to be priced to allow for its return to the original family on the Year of Jubilee.
  - b. In modern day terminology, we would think of this as a land lease rather than an outright sale.
4. God promised that if they would obey him he would give them a superabundant harvest in the sixth year to carry them over into the Sabbatical year and the Year of Jubilee.
5. If a man became poor, and sold himself into slavery, he was to be treated as a hired worker, and would receive his liberty in the Year of Jubilee.

Conclusion:

1. The Sabbath was always intended by God to provide rest for the people, and a time for remembering God’s providence.
2. The Sabbath became a burden for the Israelites because they lost sight of its true meaning.
3. Through the generations, various aspects of the Sabbath were neglected, violated, or despised.
4. The observance of the Sabbath became very legalistic, and it was the focus of numerous traditions as the Jews tried to specifically define what was allowed or disallowed by the commandment.
5. Jesus tried to correct this by telling his countrymen that they had lost the significance and beauty of the Sabbath laws by allowing their traditions to overshadow its meaning. “The Sabbath was made for man, not man for the Sabbath.”

## **Chapter VI** **Levites and Priests**

Introduction:

1. Review Chapter III on the Tabernacle concerning the Levites and their responsibilities for the Tabernacle.
2. The duties of the Levites included disassembling, transporting, and reassembling the Tabernacle when it was moved from place to place, particularly during the period of wilderness wanderings.
3. One tenth of the tithe of the Israelites went for the support of the Levites. See Num. 18:21-26.
4. The Levites were also assigned certain duties in their service to the nation.

### **I. The Levites.**

- A. The background of their place and work. See Num 1:47-54 and Num. 3-4 for a more complete summary of the divisions and duties of the Levites.
  1. Very little is said about the Levites until we come to the book of Numbers.
  2. The census identified those who were 20 years old and over, who could serve in Israel's army. The Levites were not included in this census because they were charged with care and transport of the Tabernacle and its furnishings.
  3. The firstborn of animals and humans was always dedicated as belonging to the Lord. The humans were to be redeemed by animal sacrifices. See Ex. 13:1-16.
    - a. With the Levites, however, the entire tribe "belonged to the Lord" not just their firstborn.
    - b. The initial dedication and purification of the Levites is found in Num. 8:5-26.
  4. The Levites were always under the supervision of Aaron and his sons.
  5. Korah, a Levite, along with others in Israel, instigated a rebellion, saying that Moses and Aaron were taking too much authority. The rebels contended that the whole nation was holy to the Lord, and should be given a stronger voice.
    - a. Moses' response shows that this was an effort to combine, in some way, the priesthood and the Levites (Numb. 16:10), although specific details are not given.
    - b. The earth opened and swallowed up the rebels.
  6. The Levites were not assigned a specific territory of land in Canaan as the other tribes were.

- a. Instead, they were given the suburbs (pasturelands) of forty-eight towns in Canaan, six of which were designated as cities of refuge. These will be discussed later.
- b. The size of these pasturelands was specified. See Num. 35:1-8.

B. The duties of the Levites.

1. They were charged with the work of disassembling and reassembling the Tabernacle.
2. Each division of the Levites was charged with specific duties regarding this.
  - a. The Kohathites carried the holy furniture. Num. 4:1-20
  - b. The Gershonites carried the curtains of the Tabernacle, outer court coverings, etc. Num. 4:21-28
  - c. The Merarites carried the frames of the Tabernacle, the posts, and hardware. Num. 4:29-33
3. They came into this service at age 30, and served until age 50. Num. 4:3
4. Following the death of Solomon, the kingdom divided, and Jeroboam changed the worship in the Kingdom of Israel (north). He appointed his own priests, and other attendants for the sanctuaries he had built at Dan and Bethel. Many of the Levites left the northern kingdom and moved to the south where the temple was located.
5. During the reign of David, and other kings who followed, the Levites had the role of singers and musicians. I Chron. 15:16-22.
6. After the return from the Babylonian Exile, the Levites, along with Nehemiah and Ezra read the Law to the people and instructed them.
7. When the Israelites confessed their sins and those of their fathers in Neh. 9, they promised to separate themselves from the people of the land and return to God's Law. At this time the Levites took a special leadership role, affixing their signatures to a document describing this event and the resolution.

C. Support of the Levites.

1. They received a tithe from the other tribes. Num. 18:21-30. This is also described as a tithe of the tithe. Some however believe this was an extra tithe required just for the Levites, and that it was from the agricultural production of the people.
2. The Levites had to share their tithe with the widows, orphans, and strangers. See Deut. 14:27-29

II. The priesthood.

A. The general nature and significance of pagan priesthoods compared to the priesthood in Israel.

1. Priests are found in almost all religions of the world, and they predate the priests under the Mosaic Law.
2. In pagan religions the priest served multiple functions. They were spiritual advisors to rulers, prophets representing the gods, and the revealers of the will of the gods. In addition, of course, they had functions in worship, sacrifice, and general spiritual guidance of their people.
  - a. At various times in the history of pagan nations the priests led rebellions against rulers whom they perceived as going against the “will of the gods.” Sometime these priestly rebellions came simply because the rulers were acting against what the priests saw as their own self interests. At times, they led rebellions against rulers whom they believed to be usurping priestly powers.
  - b. Rulers, on the other hand, opposed the priests when they perceived them to be a threat to the power of the ruler. Egyptian history, especially during the fourteenth century B.C., was very theocratic, giving opportunity for competition between ruler and priest.
  - c. In Egypt, King Amenhotep IV, who changed his name to Akhenaton illustrates this point.
    - 1) He became a devotee to the god Aton (the sun disk), and moved the Egyptian capital from Thebes to Akhetaton (modern day Amarna).
    - 2) This move infuriated the priests of the god Amon (also referred to as Amen), and a great rivalry ensued between the royalty and the priests of Amon.
  - d. A Biblical incident, which may have some similarities to this, is found when Samuel rebuked King Saul for usurping the place of the prophet when Saul offered an unauthorized sacrifice prior to going into battle. See I Sam. 13:7-14.
3. In general terms, the priest among the pagans was thought of as a go-between or intermediary between human beings and their gods. This was generally because the ordinary person was not considered worthy to approach the divine presence.

B. Biblical use of the words priest and priesthood.

1. The first occurrence of the word “priest” in the Old Testament is in Gen. 14:18 when Abraham met Melchizedek, who was called a priest of God.
2. After this various priests are mentioned prior to the Law of Moses.
  - a. Gen. 41:45. Joseph’s father-in-law was priest of On.
  - b. Ex. 3:1. Jethro, Moses’ father-in-law was priest of Midian.

- c. Ex. 19:23-24. There were priests in Israel prior to the time that Moses received the Law. God told Moses that he was not to allow the people or the priests to come to the mountain with him.
- d. Other priests are mentioned in the early part of the Old Testament, but we have no way of knowing whether some of them were priests of God, or pagan priests.

3. God's intent for Israel was that they were to be "a kingdom of priests and a holy nation." (Ex. 19:6)

- a. This, however, did not do away with the idea of the priest being an intermediary between God and man.
- b. Some scholars believe that the Latin word for priest originally meant a "bridge-builder." The etymology of the word however is not clear.
- c. The word "priest" comes from the Latin word "pontifex" which is probably from *pont-*, stem of *pons* "bridge" + *-fex, -ficiis*, root of *facere* "make." If so, the word originally meant "bridge-maker," or "path-maker." (See "Online Etymology Dictionary.")
- d. The Biblical idea of the word is certainly in keeping with this etymology and definition.

C. The Aaronic priesthood (also referred to as the Levitical priesthood).

- 1. Moses was to appoint Aaron and his descendants to be priests under the Law. Ex. 28:1-6.
- 2. Special clothing was specified for the priests. See Ex. 28:1-43, 39:1-43.
- 3. The ordination of Aaron and his sons is shown in Lev. 9.
  - a. On the eighth day following this ordination they began to assume their duties as priests.
  - b. The garments of all of the priests were white, but the High Priest was to wear a blue robe with golden bells at the bottom, an ephod with two shoulder pieces with the names of the tribes engraved on stones, and various other specific items of clothing.
- 4. The priests were provided with portions of some of the offerings made by the people such as the peace (fellowship) offering. Also they were provided with a portion of the first fruits of the harvest, and received a tithe of the tithe paid to the Levites.

D. Some of the laws for the priests. See Lev. 21—22:16.

- 1. They could not touch a dead body except that of a close relative.
- 2. They could not make cuts on their bodies, shave their heads, or cut the corners of their beards.
- 3. They could not marry a prostitute or a divorced woman.

4. They could not tear their clothes, and must not allow their hair to become unkempt.
5. A priest could marry only a virgin, not a widow or divorced woman.
6. A deformed person, one who had marks on his body, one who was blind or lame, or had any physical abnormality could not be a priest.
7. Various other requirements and restrictions are found in the chapters cited above.

E. The priest as a spokesman for God.

1. Very little is known about this, but there were times when a priest acted as one who delivered answers from God.
2. The Urim and Thummim were sometimes the vehicles for these revelations.
  - a. The exact appearance of the Urim and Thummim is not known, but Ex. 28:30 speaks of them being placed over the breastplate worn by the High Priest. They functioned as a means of ascertaining a “yes” or “no” answer from God.
  - b. At the time of the death of Aaron (Num 20:27-29) the priestly garments are placed on Eleazar his son. In Num. 27:20-22 we see that Eleazar is performing the duties of the priest and he is instructed to inquire from the Lord.
3. Some possible examples of these are given below:
  - a. In I Sam. 14:36-39 Saul inquired of the Lord, but God did not answer. This seems to have been taken as a negative response.
  - b. In I Sam. 23:7-12 David inquired of Abiathar the priest for an answer concerning Saul’s tactics and plans.
  - c. In I Sam. 30:7-8 there is a similar incident where David inquired concerning whether or not he should pursue a raiding party.
4. After the fall of the city of Shiloh it was no longer possible for Israel to offer its sacrifices at the Tabernacle, since it no longer existed.
  - a. Certain changes took place concerning the functions and roles of prophets and priests as well as the place(s) where sacrifices were offered. The Old Testament does not give much information on these transitions except a few statements about the location of the Ark of the Covenant, and these statements do little to help us understand the overall situation.
  - b. It was not until the building of Solomon’s temple that there was again a central place of sacrifice.
  - c. As mentioned above, in I Sam. 13:5-14 Saul is severely rebuked for offering a sacrifice which Samuel was supposed to offer, while in II Sam. 6 there are numerous sacrifices offered as the Ark of the Covenant is

brought to Jerusalem. David himself offered sacrifices on this occasion. II Sam. 6:17-18. Apparently all of this was done with full divine approval.

- d. The fact is that we do not have enough information in the Old Testament to come to any conclusion on these matters, but they should not become matters of concern for us.

F. The functions of the priests.

- 1. Pagan priests were thought of as ministering to their gods or goddesses in order to keep them supplied with food and other things needed by the deities.
  - a. By doing this they were supposedly courting the favor of the god to act in their behalf with fertility, security, protection, victory, etc.
  - b. Paul, in Acts 17:24-25 mentions to the Athenians that God did not need anything which could be supplied by mankind, but that he was the giver of all things good.
- 2. The priests under the Law of Moses were never supposed to be viewed in this way.
  - a. Instead, Israel's God is seen as a loving Father who is moral, holy, and pure. He is the author and sustainer of life, one who loves his creation, and ultimately desires that his children (all of mankind) to be brought to him.
  - b. This could never be accomplished however if mankind was stained with sin. Therefore the sacrifices, the worship, and all of God's commandments were for the ultimate good of mankind. Man's life was to become like that of God himself, and he was to become a person of holiness in order to stand before his God.
  - c. The function of the priests in Israel's religion was not to appease the wrath and fury of an angry God through sacrifice and other offering, but to cause the worshipper to know the severity of his sin, and the love of God in his willingness to forgive.
- 3. The Israelite priests then were true "bridge builders" between man and God. They were to offer the sacrifices (Lev. 17:1-9), and officiate as directed on the various holy days. They also took care of the various daily tasks in the Tabernacle and later in the temple.
- 4. The ordinary priests performed the daily tasks of sacrifice, incense burning, caring for the service in the Holy Place, etc., while the high priest alone had certain specified duties concerning certain sacrifices and special duties on certain holy days.
  - a. The priests also had to examine those suspected of having leprosy (skin disorders of various kinds), purifying persons and objects, and other duties.

- b. In Israel's later history the priests also served as teachers of the Law, and the prophets exposed spiritual, social, economic, and physical abuses among the people. (Ezek. 7:26, Mic. 3:11).

#### G. Divisions of the priests.

- 1. During the reign of David, the priests were divided into twenty-four divisions, but very little is said in the Bible about these divisions. See I Chron. 24:10.
  - a. Since all male descendants of Aaron could conceivably be priests, there were many who never performed very noticeable tasks.
  - b. Priests were systematically chosen by lot to perform the duties around the temple for a specified short time, usually about two weeks.
- 2. Luke speaks of Zechariah, a priest and the father of John the Baptist, as being of the division of Abijah
  - a. He was given the duty of burning the incense. It was during the execution of this task that the angel appeared to him and told him that his wife, Elizabeth would have a child. Lk. 1:5-10.
  - b. To have the honor of burning the incense would have been considered a once in a lifetime opportunity.

Conclusion:

- 1. Although the Law of Moses set forth specific duties of the priests, through the history of Israel, the functions of the priests varied somewhat.
- 2. The New Testament, particularly Hebrews 9-10, uses the sacrificial system under the Law to help us better understand the severity of sin, and the sacrificial atonement of Christ.

## Chapter VII

### Holy Days and Festivals

Introduction:

1. All religions have times of the year when festivals, fasts, and other types of holy days are observed. Christianity and Judaism both look to God as the author of most of these observances.
  - a. Basically, the New Testament has only one such day, the Lord's Day.
  - b. Through the history of Christianity numerous days of celebration have been added.
2. Some of Israel's holy convocations were festive while others were very solemn.
3. During Israel's later history celebrations other than those in the Law were added to their religious calendar.
  - a. The Feast of Dedication (Hanukkah) has its roots in 163 B.C. when Judas Maccabeus recaptured Jerusalem from the Syrians ruler, Antiochus IV (Epiphanes) and rededicated the temple. John 10:22 mentions that Jesus attended this feast. An account of the decree declaring this to be a national holiday can be found in the book of I Maccabees which gives part of the history of the Intertestamental period. I Maccabees 13:51-52 reads as follows:

The Jews made their entry on the twenty-third day of the second month in the year 171, with acclamations and carrying palms, to the sound of lyres, cymbals and harps, chanting hymns and canticles, since a great enemy had been crushed and thrown out of Israel. Simon made it a day of annual rejoicing. He fortified the Temple hill on the Citadel side, and took up residence there with his men.

- b. The Feast of Purim was instituted to celebrate Esther's leadership in the victory of the Jews over the Persians who had plotted to kill the Jews. There is no reference to this celebration in the New Testament. Est. 9:20-22 reads as follows:

Mordecai recorded these events, and he sent letters to all the Jews throughout the provinces of King Xerxes, near and far, to have them celebrate annually the fourteenth and fifteenth days of the month of Adar as the time when the Jews got relief from their enemies, and as the month when their sorrow was turned into joy and their mourning into a day of celebration. He wrote them to observe the days as days of feasting and joy and giving presents of food to one another and gifts to the poor.

4. It must be kept in mind that both Judaism and Christianity are historical religions, and these holy days are based on historical events.
  - a. This means that the religion actually has its basis in historical fact, where God is shown to have dealt with real people in real time, and the religion came out of a real historical context. With historical religions, holy days are usually days of remembrance of an actual historical event of great importance (*e.g.* Passover, or the Lord's Supper) or a strong reminder of something very significant about the worshipper's relationship to God (*e.g.* Day of Atonement).
  - b. Religions which are not historical usually have a code of laws, but the origin of the religion may be lost or is embedded in myths, tales, and legends which are usually polytheistic, containing unlikely or impossible stories of the activities of their gods. These activities have no real basis in historical facts, and are usually very fanciful. Roman, Greek, and Mesopotamian mythology are examples.
5. At three great annual festivals, all male Israelites were required to be present. See Deut. 16:16-17. These were:
  - a. The Feast of Unleavened Bread (Passover).
  - b. The Feast of Weeks (also referred to as the Feast of Harvest). In the New Testament this is Pentecost.
  - c. The Feast of Tabernacles.
6. The observance of holy days and other festivals under the Law of Moses accomplished at least three important objectives. These three objectives make it imperative that we study and understand the nature of these observances.
  - a. They served as reminders to the worshippers of what God had done for the nation during its past history.
  - b. They served to draw the worshippers closer to God in gratitude for his goodness to the nation.
  - c. They served to unite the nation internally toward the goal of loyal faithful service to a loving God.
7. It should also be observed that the Israelite nation not only believed that God had worked in their past history (such as the exodus) and in the lives of their forefathers, but also that every generation was, in fact, a part of those historic events.
8. These objectives can be seen clearly during the reforms of King Hezekiah (II Chron. 29-31) and King Josiah (II Chron. 34-35), and when the Jews' return from Babylonian Exile (Neh. 8-9).

## I. The Passover and the Feast of Unleavened Bread.

### A. The origin of the Passover and the duties of the people.

1. It began in Egypt just prior to the last plague, the death of the firstborn. See Ex. 11:1-10, 12:12-13, 29-30
  - a. The Passover had its origin on the night prior to Israel's escape from the slavery of Egypt. The firstborn of the Egyptian people and of all their animals were stricken dead as punishment for Pharaoh's refusal to allow Israel to leave. Although Ex. 11:5-6 mentions only the cattle, Ex. 12:12-13 expands this to include the firstborn of all of the Egyptian animals.
  - b. The Passover and the Feast of Unleavened Bread were combined.
    - 1) The Feast of Unleavened Bread was to be celebrated from the evening of the fourteenth day of the first month (the day following the celebration of the Passover) until the evening of the twenty-first day. Ex. 12:14-20, and Num. 28:16-25.
    - 2) Obviously, at the first Passover, the Feast of Unleavened Bread could not be celebrated because the Israelites escaped from Egypt that night.
2. Psalms 78:40-55 recounts some of the events surrounding the plagues in Egypt, referring to the death of the firstborn as coming from a “band of destroying (evil) angels.” This may be poetic license used by the psalmist, and it probably accounts for the popular phrase “death angel” when referring to this event. The Old Testament does not use that phrase.
3. The Israelites were to do the following things in preparation for the plague of the death of the firstborn of Egypt.
  - a. That was the month Abib or Nisan, and was to be the beginning of months for Israel. It was the time of our March-April. See Appendix B, “The Annual Calendar.”
  - b. On the tenth day of the month they were to set aside a lamb or a goat. Although a lamb is generally thought of in reference to the Passover, the Hebrew word can refer to either a lamb or a kid, and it is specified in Ex. 12:5 that the animal could be either a lamb or kid.
  - c. In the New Testament the word for lamb *ἀμνός* (*amnos*) is used when referring to Christ (John 1:29, “the lamb of God”) but when referring to the Passover, the word *πάσχα* (*pascha*) is used, generally translated as Passover lamb or paschal lamb.

## B. Specifications and instructions concerning the Passover.

1. The lamb or goat which was set aside on the tenth day was to be slaughtered at twilight on the fourteenth day of the first month. The animal had to be a male, one year old, without any defects.
2. The blood of the Passover animal was to be spread on the door posts and lintel of the house as a sign. God told Moses, “When I see the blood I will pass over you.” Ex. 12:13.

- a. The Israelites were told to stay inside of the house, to roast and eat the entire Passover animal that night, and to be fully clothed with staff in hand and sandals on their feet. They were to eat it hurriedly, and anything that was not eaten was to be burned. No bones of the animal were to be broken. See Ex. 12:11, Num. 9:1-14.
  - b. They were to rid their houses of yeast, and the Passover was to be eaten with unleavened bread. Deut. 16:1-3.
  - c. This was to become a commemorative day throughout Israel's history.
3. In conjunction with the Passover, the Feast of Unleavened Bread was instituted at the same time.
  - a. On the first day they were to rid their houses of yeast, and for seven days there was to be no food containing yeast eaten or allowed in their houses.
  - b. They were to tell this story to their children when asked the meaning of the Passover.
  - c. Today, when Jews observe the Passover the youngest male child is appointed to ask the question concerning the meaning of the celebration. The oldest man, usually the patriarch of the family, then recounts the story in detail as found in Exodus 11-12.

C. The consecration of the first born.

1. Because the first born of men and animals among the Egyptians died in the last plague, God demanded that the first born male of humans and animals be given to Him. In addition, the first fruits of the produce of the land were to be given to Him.
2. Male children and certain animals could be redeemed by offering to the Lord a substitute as specified.
  - a. A donkey for example could be redeemed by offering a lamb.
  - b. A firstborn human was to be redeemed, but it is not completely clear as to how this was done.
  - c. In Num 3:11-13 God says, "I have taken the Levites from among the Israelites in place of the first male offspring." In this passage he also said, "I set apart for myself every firstborn in Israel whether man or animal."
    - 1) In Num. 3:44-51 a special situation is cited, and we are told that these Israelites were to be redeemed (dedicated) by payment of five shekels of silver, "according to the sanctuary shekel."
    - 2) In Num. 18:14-16, a statement is made that the firstborn among humans is to be redeemed by payment of five shekels of silver "according to the sanctuary shekel."

- d. Mary and Joseph brought Jesus to the temple, “to present him to the Lord, (as it is written in the Law of the Lord, ‘every firstborn male is to be consecrated to the Lord’).” Luke 2:22-24

D. Exceptions and restrictions regarding celebration of the Passover. Ex. 12:43-51, Num. 9:1-14.

- 1. Num. 9:10. If a person was unclean, or was traveling, he was to celebrate the feast one month later.
- 2. Num. 9:14. A temporary resident could not eat the Passover, but an alien could do so if he followed the regulations.
- 3. Ex. 12:43-45. A slave, bought with the Israelite’s money was allowed to celebrate the Passover, if he was circumcised and followed all of the regulations. No uncircumcised male was allowed to eat the Passover.

E. The celebration of the Feast of Unleavened Bread. See Num. 28:16-25.

- 1. On the fifteenth day of the first month, the day after the Passover, a festival was to be held. This was the Feast of Unleavened Bread, and was one of the three great annual feasts of Israel. See Ex. 23:14-19.
  - a. No work was to be done, and they were to eat only unleavened bread.
  - b. A sacred assembly was to be held, and specified sacrifices were to be offered.
    - 1) Two young bulls.
    - 2) One ram.
    - 3) Seven male lambs.
    - 4) One male goat.
    - 5) All of these offerings were in addition to the regular daily burnt offerings.
    - 6) Various meal offerings were specified to accompany these burnt offerings.
- 2. These sacrifices had to be made at “the place he will choose as a dwelling for his Name.” Deut. 16:5. This was to be the location of the Tabernacle, and later applied to the temple.

II. Feast of Weeks, also known as Feast of Harvest. In the New Testament this is known as Pentecost. This was also one of the three great annual feasts of Israel. Ex. 23:14-19.

A. Old Testament references to this feast.

- 1. Ex. 23:15, 34:22. Both of these passages simply identify the feast without giving much additional information.

2. Lev. 23:15-21. This passage is the longest in the Old Testament describing this celebration. From it we learn the following:
  - a. This was a one-day festival.
  - b. It marked the beginning of the harvest of grains (wheat and barley), and consequently was also called the Feast of Harvest. The wheat harvest lasted from mid May until mid June.
  - c. This was to be a day of thanksgiving for the rain and produce of agricultural crops, symbolized by the grain harvest.
  - d. The day on which this celebration was to take place was calculated by beginning with the Sabbath of the Feast of Unleavened Bread when they waved the sheaf offering of grain (wheat) harvest.
    - 1) From that Sabbath, they were to count seven Sabbaths (forty-nine days), and celebrate the Feast of Weeks on the day after the seventh Sabbath (the fiftieth day).
    - 2) This meant that this feast was always celebrated on the first day of the week, the day after the seventh Sabbath.
  - e. A new grain offering was to be presented on this day, along with two loaves of bread baked with yeast. Lev. 23:17
  - f. In addition, seven male lambs, each one year old, a young bull, and two rams were to be offered as burnt sacrifices. All of these animals were to be without blemish.
  - g. A grain offering and drink offering for each of these was also to be presented.
3. For a complete picture of this feast, see the following references: Ex. 23:16, 34:22, Lev. 23:15-21, Num 28:26-31, and Deut. 16:9-12.
4. There arose a later Hebrew tradition, written in the Jewish “Book of Jubilees,” that it was on the day of this feast that Moses received the Torah (Law), and that this was the real “memorial” idea behind the Feast of Weeks. There is no credibility or Biblical evidence for this tradition.
  - a. “The Book of Jubilees” is among the Jewish pseudepigrapha (false writings), and it comes from about 100 B.C.
  - b. The book is a fanciful attempt by an unknown author to fix the exact day of which certain important event in Genesis and Exodus occurred. These are supposedly in chronological order, based on cycles of forty-nine years each.

## B. References in the New Testament.

1. In the New Testament, this feast day was called Pentecost, from the Greek word **πεντηκοστή** (*penthkoste*) meaning “fiftieth.”

2. Pentecost is mentioned only three times in the New Testament. Acts 2:1 Acts 20:16, and I Cor. 16:8.
3. This was the day on which the church began (Acts 2), when the Holy Spirit fell on the apostles.

### III. The Feast of Trumpets.

- A. Very little information is given concerning this celebration. The references below are the basic ones. This feast is not mentioned in the New Testament.
  1. Significance and time of the feast. Lev. 23:23-25.
    - a. This celebration was held on the first day of the seventh month which was the month of Tishri. This means it would be in September or October.
    - b. The day was to be celebrated by blasts on the trumpets, and no work was to be done.
  2. Offerings for the feast. Num. 29:1-6.
    - a. One young bull, one ram, seven male lambs one year old, and a male goat (as a sin offering) were to be sacrificed during this feast.
    - b. Each of these offerings was to be accompanied by a specified offering of fine flour.
- B. There is no specific mention of this celebration in Israel's history, although some instances where trumpets were blown may have been connected to this day.
  1. Blowing trumpets was to accompany various celebrations.
  2. Sometimes the blowing of trumpets was a signal of danger or war, while other uses of trumpets was in celebration, such as at this feast.
    - a. Later the month of Tishri (seventh month) became the beginning of the civil calendar for Israel.
    - b. As such, this feast day is now called *Rosh Hashanah*, the Jewish New Year.

### IV. Day of Atonement.

- A. Details of the observance of this day.
  1. This was to be observed on the tenth day of the month of Tishri which is our month of September or October.
    - a. The Day of Atonement was preceded, in the same month, by the Feast of Trumpets and the celebration of the New Moon (on the first day of each month).

- b. It was followed by the Feast of Tabernacles on the fifteenth to twenty-second day of the same month. See Lev. 16:29, 23:23, 23:33, and Num. 28:14,
- 2. Because the Day of Atonement is given prominence in Heb. 9-10, it is important that the details of this day be understood.
  - a. It was on this day only that the High Priest was instructed to enter the Most Holy Place to make atonement for himself, his family, and the entire nation.
  - b. This is the only fast day commanded in the Law of Moses.
    - 1) In post-exilic Judaism many other fast days were traditionally observed, but were not part of the Law. Some of these are seen during the life of Christ.
    - 2) Mondays and Thursdays were observed by many Jews of Jesus day as the supposed time when Moses ascended Mt. Sinai, and the day he came down with the tablets of stone.
    - 3) There is no evidence of this in the Old Testament, but this is the basis of the Pharisee's claim to righteousness by fasting twice each week. See Luke 18:9-14.
- 3. An offering in behalf of the high priest and his family.
  - a. The High Priest was to bathe himself, and put on prescribed garments.
  - b. From the Israelite community he was to select two male goats as sin offerings.
    - 1) He then presented these goats to the Lord at the entrance of the Tent of Meeting. Lots were cast between them to determine one goat for the Lord, and the other as the scapegoat, or Azazel.
    - 2) We are not told exactly what is the character and method of "casting lots" but it frequently used in the Bible.
    - 3) The Lord's goat was to be sacrificed later as a sin offering.
  - c. The High Priest then selected a young bull for a sin offering and a ram for a burnt offering. These were sacrificed later.
- 4. Some observations on sin offering.
  - a. The word used in Lev. 16:5 when referring to the "sin" offering describes one who "misses, or falls short of" an intended goal or act.
  - b. Lev. 4:1-35 shows that the sin offering dealt specifically with unintentional sins and sins of ignorance. Also see this summarized in Chapter IV, "Old Testament Sacrifices."

- c. There were different specifications and regulations for different types of sins of this nature. Sins of ignorance or unintentional sins of priests were dealt with differently from those of the whole Israelite community. A community leader's sins of ignorance were dealt with differently from others, etc.

5. Observations on the burnt offerings.

- a. Notice that burnt offerings for Aaron and the community were also to be made on the Day of Atonement. See Lev. 16:23-25.
- b. The purpose of the burnt offering was to make atonement. Read Lev. 1:1-17, particularly vs. 4, concerning the specifications and purpose of burnt offering, and review Chapter IV, "Old Testament Sacrifices."

6. Atonement for the High Priest and his family.

- a. The High Priest entered the Most Holy Place with the blood of the bull for his own sin offering, two handfuls of incense, and hot coals.
- b. In the Most Holy Place he sprinkled the blood seven times on the front of the atonement cover (mercy seat), and burned the incense so that the smoke enveloped the atonement cover.

7. Atonement for the sins of the people.

- a. The High Priest then returned to the outside, where he slaughtered the Lord's goat as a sin offering for the people.
- b. The blood of this goat was taken into the Most Holy Place where the previous procedure was repeated.
- c. This was considered a cleansing of the Most Holy Place and the people, "whatever their sins have been." Lev. 16:16
- d. Some of the blood of both the bull and the goat was then put on all of the horns of the altar of burnt offerings to cleanse it. Thus, the Tent of Meeting, the altar, and the Most Holy Place have all been atoned for.

8. The scapegoat.

- a. Aaron, the High Priest, then laid both of his hands on the live goat and confessed the sins of the people.
- b. This goat was led out into a solitary place in the wilderness and released. "The goat will carry on itself all their sins to a solitary place." Lev. 16:22.
- c. Aaron then removed his ceremonial clothing, bathed himself, put on his regular clothing, and returned to offer the burnt offering for atonement for himself and the people. He also burned the fat of the sin offering on the altar.
- d. The bull and the goat for the sin offerings, whose blood was taken into the Most Holy Place, were taken outside the camp and burned completely.

B. Christ's sacrifice as atonement.

1. The ninth and tenth chapters of Hebrews describe the Day of Atonement and show how Christ is the perfect sacrifice.
2. Notice that Heb. 9:7 speaks of the Day of Atonement dealing with the sins of ignorance which the priest and people had committed.
3. The writer of Hebrews also says that our own atonement is not brought about by the blood of animals, but by the blood of Jesus. Consequently, for us, there is not a remembrance of sin made each year, but Christ died once for all, forgiving and redeeming us. See Heb. 9:9-14. 10:1-4, 17-18.

V. Feast of Tabernacles. This is also referred to as the Feast of Ingathering or the Feast of Booths. This was the third of the three great annual feasts. Ex. 23:14-19.

A. The origin of the feast.

1. Accounts of this feast with its requirements are found in Lev. 23:33-43, Num. 29:12-39, and Deut. 16:13-17. It is briefly mentioned in Ex. 23:16 and 34:22.
2. This was a celebration of the completed harvest, when the crops had been gathered in. Lev. 23:39
3. The feast was to take place on the fifteenth day of the seventh month.
  - a. This would be the Hebrew month of Tishri, which is during September-October.
  - b. Including the Feast of Tabernacles, there were four holy days observed during the month of Tishri. They were:
    - 1) New Moon observed on the first day of each month.
    - 2) Feast of Trumpets observed on the first day of the month, Tishri.
    - 3) Day of Atonement observed on the tenth day of the month, Tishri.
    - 4) Feast of Tabernacles observed on the fifteenth day of the month Tishri.
4. The Feast of Tabernacles lasted seven days. On the first day of the feast no work was to be done. Lev. 23:33-35.
5. All Israel was to celebrate the feast as a joyful occasion. They were to be joined by their servants, sons, daughters, Levites, aliens, fatherless, and orphans. Deut. 16:13-14

B. The purpose and observance of the feast.

1. They were to offer sacrifices on each of the seven days, and the eighth was to be a solemn convocation. On that day they were to do no work.
2. On the first day they were to take the choice fruit, palm fronds, leafy branches, and poplars and rejoice before the Lord. No specifications were given concerning how this celebration was to take place. It appears therefore that they could celebrate it in any way they desired.

3. The people were to live in booths (temporary dwellings such as tents – tabernacles) for seven days. See Lev. 23:42. For this reason, this was later referred to as the Feast of Booths. Usually these booths were placed on the housetops or outside of the city in a clearing.
  - a. The purpose of the feast was to commemorate the time when the Israelites lived in temporary dwellings during the exodus.
  - b. The practice was to be handed down to their descendants so they would remember God's action in bringing the nation out of Egypt.
  - c. During the days of Nehemiah and Ezra, the people celebrated this feast in a very elaborate way. See Neh. 8:13-17.
  - d. Josephus mentions that during the Intertestamental (post-exilic) Period this feast became very popular among the Jews of the Dispersion. They frequently made pilgrimages to Jerusalem for its celebration. Some came from as far away as Babylon and Rome for the festivities.
4. On the first day of the feast, thirteen young bulls, two rams, and fourteen male lambs a year old along with one male goat (as a sin offering) were to be offered with their prescribed meal offerings.
5. On each succeeding day until the seventh day, the number of young bulls to be offered was reduced by one (13, 12, 11, 10, 9, 8, and 7), but the number of animals for the other offerings remained the same.
6. On the eighth day of the feast there was to be an assembly at which time one bull, one ram, seven male lambs a year old, and a male goat (as a sin offering) were sacrificed, with their prescribed meal offerings. The people were to do no work on the eighth day of the feast.
7. All of these offerings were to be in addition to the daily burnt offerings in the morning and evening.

C. Post-Exilic celebration of this festival.

1. Since this was an exceptionally festive occasion, and very few instructions were given about how it should be celebrated, the Israelites developed very elaborate ways to express their national joy.
2. Josephus, *Antiquities of the Jews*, and other extra-biblical writers give interesting information concerning this celebration.
  - a. Josephus tells us that prior to the destruction of the temple in A. D. 70, the Feast of Tabernacles was celebrated with the use of four huge Menorahs placed in the temple area where some of the celebrants participated in ceremonial dances all night every night of the feast.
  - b. The light from the Menorahs was so bright that it was said to have lit up the whole city of Jerusalem.
  - c. There was also a great deal of singing of the Psalms during this feast.

3. In John 7 the writer mentions that Jesus also attended to this feast. It was on that occasion that he had one of his longest recorded encounters with the Jews. Part of this encounter was Jesus' teaching on "The Light of the World" (Jn. 8:12), an appropriate topic for that occasion.

Conclusion:

1. Some of Israel's festive days are not Biblical celebrations, but they played an important role in later Judaism.
2. Two of the Biblical feasts were designed to commemorate past events in the history of Israel. These are the Passover and the Feast of Tabernacles.
3. The Day of Atonement was a time of remembrance of sin, particularly asking for forgiveness for unintentional sins and those done in ignorance.
4. The presence of God and his mighty acts in the history and current life of Israel form the central core of their celebrations and holy days.

## **Chapter VIII**

### **Sin and Forgiveness**

Introduction:

1. Frequently we look at some important Biblical words and concepts which have a relationship to each other, and give the group a sort of generic definition. We do this without taking time to investigate the independent meaning of these words, and thereby rob ourselves of a deeper understanding of the word of God. Our salvation is a lovely jewel with many facets. Each face of this jewel has its own beauty and its own meaning. The better our knowledge and comprehension of these facets the deeper will be our appreciation and gratitude for the salvation God has provided.
  - a. When asked the meaning of atonement, forgiveness, reconciliation, redemption, or ransom the answer usually comes by giving a general idea that any one of these words really means forgiveness, or salvation, and that they are all pretty much the same.
  - b. The fact is that each of these words provides a specific picture of something that is taking place in the mind of God as well as the mind of the sinner. Each affects the man-God relationship in different ways.
  - c. For example, the word “atonement” does not mean the same thing as the word “forgive,” and the word “ransom” does not mean the same thing as the word “reconciliation.”
2. Having said this, it is also important that we remember that these words overlap each other in some respects. This is especially seen in the words redemption and ransom.
3. Therefore we must study these words in order to understand the real significance and meaning of the Old Testament sacrificial system as well as our own hope and salvation.
4. What then is the meaning and significance of these important concepts?

I. What is sin?

- A. We cannot appreciate the meaning of any of these important words having to do with forgiveness and our salvation if we do not understand the Biblical meaning of sin. Notice a few contemporary ideas of sin.
  1. “Socially unacceptable behavior.”
    - a. Certain behavior patterns have gained general societal acceptance, but are condemned in the Bible.
    - b. Promiscuous sexual practices, drug and alcohol abuse, divorce, and dishonesty fall into this category.

c. Non-judgmental positions.

- 1) On May 15, 2008 the California Supreme Court overturned a California law forbidding same-sex marriage. There were thousands of demonstrators in the streets proclaiming victory for “tolerance, non-discrimination, and freedom of choice” in marriage. God’s purpose in marriage had no place in their thoughts, and the sinfulness of homosexuality was not a consideration.
- 2) Some socially acceptable behavior is strongly condemned in the Bible, but those who uphold the Biblical directives are frequently told that they are not to “judge” others. To support this they quote Jesus’ statement in Matt. 7:1-2, “Judge not that you be not judged.” This is a misapplication of Jesus’ statement.
- 3) Society then becomes its own authority on what is right or wrong. Obviously societies change from one generation to another and the concept of acceptable behavior changes as well.

- d. Such a position says that there is no external standard for right or wrong.
- e. If this were universally practiced it would lead to a sort of moral and ethical anarchy.

2. “I have the right to decide for myself what is right or wrong.” A university student once said to me, “I’m my own god. I decide for myself what’s right or wrong.” Biblical restrictions are given for our own happiness, not simply as arbitrary prohibitions.
  - a. Does each person have the right to decide for himself what is right or wrong? What are some of the implications of such a position?
  - b. This position also says that there is no external standard of right or wrong.
  - c. This is basically the position taken by Adam and Eve in the Garden of Eden.
    - 1) This is the reason people violate laws they don’t agree with, or don’t like, or when they think they can “get away with it.”
    - 2) Man’s desire for autonomy (freedom) is at the base of this position.
3. A common, but over simplified answer among religious people is that “sin is a violation of God’s law,” based on I John 3:4.
  - a. This is true, but the original languages give us some very vivid pictures of just what this means by using a variety of interesting words.
  - b. Each of the words we will consider in this study is used in the Bible to give us a different perspective on sin. They are not theoretical or vague in their descriptions of wrong doing.

4. In translating from one language to another there may not be an exact equivalent word. Both Hebrew and Greek have a whole group of words translated by the English words sin, transgression, or guilt, none of which exactly capture the picture in the mind of a Hebrew or Greek writer.

B. The Greek words **αμαρτανω** (verb, *hamartano*) and **αμαρτια** (noun *hamartia*) occurs frequently in the LXX and the New Testament. They are from the same root, and basically mean to commit an error or offense. This is one of the most frequently used words in both the Old Testament and New Testament and is generally translated by the English word “sin.”

1. These words picture a person missing, or falling short, or deviating from the right path.
2. The Hebrew word (Old Testament) and the Greek word (New Testament) present the same picture in both meaning and etymology. The words have both religious and secular uses.
  - a. In a secular way, they refer to a person who missed the point, or got off on the wrong road. This happened in ignorance or unintentionally. The same idea is present as it pertains to sin.
  - b. In a religious sense, the words refer to a person who aims, but misses, or one who steps over the line unintentionally. They emphasize the idea of failing, or missing what one aims at, but the emphasis is that the deed was unintentional or unknown. This does not deal with a high handed sin or an intentional sin.
  - c. It is used in Lev. 4:1-3 where the Law specifies that the sin offering is dealing with a person who commits a sin in ignorance or unintentionally. This is also specified for the sacrifice of the sin offering on the Day of Atonement.

C. The Greek words **ασεβεια** (noun, *asebeia*) and **ασεβεω** (verb, *asebeō*) are from the same root, and mean to commit an ungodly act or to act wickedly. The word is used in reference to profanation of holy things, or to commit sacrilege.

1. In II Sam. 22:22 David said, “For I have kept the ways of the Lord; I have not done evil by turning from my God.” Here the word **ησεβησα** (*ēsebēsa*) from **ασεβεια** is translated “evil.”
2. In Deut. 9:4 Moses tells Israel “It is on account of the wickedness of these nations that the Lord is going to drive them out before you.” Here the same word is translated “wickedness.”
3. Notice that sin, as described in this word, is a deliberate action, not unintentionally missing the target.

D. The Greek word **ανομια** (noun, *anomia*) means to act lawlessly, or to be in violation of the law.

1. This is a compound word, connecting the prefix “a” with the word for law, meaning to act “without, or outside of the law.”
2. This is the word used in the New Testament in I John 3:4 where John says, “Sin is lawlessness.” That is, acting outside or away from the law.
  - a. John uses both **ἀμαρτία** (*hamartia*) and **ἀνομία** (*anomia*) in this passage.
  - b. The strength of John’s statement is that missing the mark (or sinning unintentionally) is still sin – it is acting outside of the law of God. (Ignorance of the law is no excuse.)
3. The word is also used in reference to the punishment brought on by lawlessness.
  - a. The word is used in Gen. 19:15 where the angels warn Lot to flee in order to escape the “iniquity (punishment) of the city.”
  - b. In Lev. 16:21 the word **ἀμαρτία** (*hamartia*), to miss the mark or sin unintentionally, is used to describe the wickedness of Israel which the High Priest confessed on the Day of Atonement when he laid his hands on the head of the scapegoat.

E. There are other words also used in the Bible to describe and define sin.

1. Each has its own importance in giving us a better understanding of the idea.
2. As we study the ideas of atonement, redemption, ransom, remission, forgiveness, and reconciliation it is helpful to keep in mind that sin takes a variety of forms, and is described in a variety of ways in the Bible. So also the remaking of our relationship with God is described in a number of ways. Each makes its own unique contribution to our understanding.

II. What is forgiveness?

A. The universality of sin and the universal need for forgiveness.

1. Contemporary mankind seems not to understand the true meaning of forgiveness.
  - a. It is frequently equated with the idea of simply excusing a “bad act,” but then some acts are so bad that we just can’t “excuse” them.
  - b. Closely tied to this is the idea that forgiveness is just forgetting what happened. “Let’s just put this behind us and go on.” Forgetting the past is not the same as forgiving the past.
2. Revenge has frequently taken the place of forgiveness because “I just can’t forgive him of that terrible act, and he needs to pay a price for it.”

- a. Forgiveness between people is not an easy thing to do. Perhaps this is one reason that modern man has substituted an “easier way” to deal with sin (such as one of those described above), instead of facing its cost and the difficulty of the Biblical idea of forgiveness. Forgiveness requires that we go through the often painful process of remaking our broken relationship with God and our fellow man.
- b. Sins are serious because they are always offenses against God, and divine forgiveness is essential.
- c. With reference to our offenses against God it is necessary to remember that the initiative in forgiveness is always with God. It is never with man.
  - 1) God’s forgiveness comes to mankind as God’s free gift of grace. This is in direct contrast with the pagan religions of the ancient world as well as some contemporary religions.
  - 2) Islam, for example is not rooted in this idea. Instead, one has to be “worthy” of forgiveness if “Allah” is to forgive him. That is, he must have accumulated good works during his lifetime, or performed some great notable act (suicide bombing or martyrdom) in order to deserve divine forgiveness.
  - 3) This belief comes primarily from the fact that Islam does not have an adequate doctrine of vicarious atonement, or the cost of sin.
- 3. The need of divine forgiveness is frequently passed over because “God is a God of love, and forgiveness is his business.” When sin is thought of lightly, forgiveness cannot be properly understood.
- 4. If there is no understanding of the seriousness of sin, there can be no understanding of the need of forgiveness.
  - a. The need for divine forgiveness is thought of in many circles as a nineteenth century quaint idea which modern psychology has dismissed.
  - b. Since no one can atone for his sins, contemporary man says, “Let’s just forget about this notion of sin, and get on with our lives. There’s no use in ‘crying over spilt milk.’ It’s the future that matters, not the past.”
- 5. Some have thought of punishment (penance) as a sort of “atonement” for sins. If this were true, then man would be participating in, and contributing to his own atonement. This is part, though not all, of the thinking behind the Catholic doctrine of purgatory. In Romans and Galatians Paul addresses the futility of thinking one’s own good works constitute a component of his justification in the sight of God.
  - a. This overlooks the fact that from a Biblical perspective, punishment is not the important factor, but the sin itself is what is important.
  - b. Is. 59:1-2 speaks of the fact that man’s sins have separated him from God, and this is what is paramount.

B. Some Biblical descriptions of forgiveness.

1. In the Old Testament the words which are frequently used to describe forgiveness carry the ideas of “covering, removing and wiping away sin.”
2. In the LXX, **ἀφίημι** (*aphiēmi*) is one of the most commonly used words for forgiveness.
  - a. Its basic meaning is to send away, to remove, to set free, or to remit.
  - b. This emphasizes the idea that when sins are forgiven, they are sent away, or removed from the sinner.
  - c. The word is frequently used in a secular sense. See Ex. 22:4 where it means to pay (remit) a debt.
  - d. This word is used in Gen. 35:18 when Rachel was dying and her soul was described as “departing.”
  - e. This is the idea of sending away. See Gen. 50:17 where Joseph’s brothers ask him to forgive them, that is, “send away” their sins (**ἀφες** - *aphes* from **ἀφίημι** *aphiēmi*).
3. In the New Testament this word **ἀφίημι** (*aphiēmi*) is used more frequently than any other to describe forgiveness.
  - a. It is a broad word, and is used in reference to many situations where “sending away” or “departure” is being described.
  - b. Two examples of this usage are:
    - 1) The departure of Christ’s spirit at the time of his death (gave up his spirit). Matt. 27:50.
    - 2) Paul’s teaching forbidding divorce (sending away). II Cor. 7:11.
4. **εξαλειψω** (*exaleipso*) is also used to describe forgiveness.
  - a. The emphasis in this word is on the idea of “blotting out” a sin.
  - b. In Ps. 51:1 the psalmist asks God to “blot out” (**εξαλειψον**—*exaleipson*) his transgressions.

C. A summary of the Biblical idea of forgiveness.

1. From a Biblical perspective, the important purpose of forgiveness is to provide the means by which there can be a restoration of the relationship between God and man. Therefore we must understand the nature and importance of this relationship in order to understand the nature and importance of forgiveness.
  - a. God is always pictured as the giver and sustainer of this relationship.
  - b. Forgiveness is always presented as an act of God’s grace upon undeserving man.

- 1) Man is undeserving because his relationship with God was broken by man's own sins, not by any act of God. (Is. 59:1-2)
- 2) Therefore, forgiveness is always an act of God's grace, and is never based on man's worthiness or his accumulation of good deeds.
- 3) This is in strong contrast to the pagan religions surrounding ancient Israel where the gods would supposedly forgive man's rebellion if the gods considered the man worthy of forgiveness or if the man had done some especially noteworthy deed(s).

2. Ultimately, God's anger is not toward man (whom God loves) but toward man's sin (which God hates).
  - a. Immediately after the sin of Adam and Eve, God began revealing his intent to bring them back to himself. See Gen. 3:14-15.
  - b. We must see the absolute holiness of God in order to see the absolute necessity of his forgiveness.
  - c. In the second and third chapters of Ephesians Paul expresses this reconciliation as God's eternal purpose.
3. Forgiveness opened the way for the remaking of the God-man relationship. This is reconciliation, and the restoration of fellowship.
4. Man's forgiveness of his fellows, although admittedly imperfect, is designed to accomplish the same goal.
  - a. Because of man's own imperfection, and staining of sins, his forgiveness of his fellows can never approach the perfection of God's forgiveness.
  - b. The training of man to become more like God in this respect was emphasized in the teaching of Christ. See Matt. 18:21-35.

5. Forgiveness and the covenant.
  - a. In speaking of the covenant, we must go back to the original promise God made to Abraham in Gen. 12:1-3
  - b. The covenant was the manifestation of God's initiative toward mankind, and becomes the basic expression of the God-man relationship.
  - c. In the New Testament Paul frequently uses the fact of the covenant to describe this relationship.
    - 1) In speaking of the plight of the Gentiles being away from God, Paul speaks of them as "foreigners to the covenants of promise" (Eph. 2:12).
      - a) Although the New Testament speaks of the Old Covenant (the Law of Moses) and the New Covenant (Christ's covenant), there is a thread of consistency running through both, going back to the promise made to Abraham in Gen. 12:1-3.

- b) In Gal. 3:17 Paul affirms that the Law of Moses did not set aside the covenant God had made with Abraham 430 years earlier. The sacrifice of Christ is God's means of fulfilling the promise to Abraham.
- c) In Gal. 3:26-29 Paul strongly affirms that we (all Christians) are heirs with Abraham to this promise.

- 2) In both Old Testament and New Testament this relationship is broken when sin enters the picture, and it is only through forgiveness that this relationship can be remade.
- 3) The Bible uses a variety of words (such as atonement, remission, redemption, ransom, and reconciliation) to describe various aspects of what took place on the cross. The ninth and tenth chapters of Hebrews demonstrate how the sacrifices under the Law foreshadowed some of these concepts, but were always inadequate.

#### 6. Forgiveness and the sacrificial system.

- a. If we do not have a clear idea of Biblical forgiveness, we cannot understand the Old Testament sacrificial system.
- b. In the sacrifices of the Old Testament there was a symbolic enactment of atonement, ransom, redemption, and remission which brought about forgiveness and reconciliation.
- c. There was a vicarious participation by the worshipper in the sacrifices. Take the Day of Atonement as an example.
  - 1) The hands of the High Priest were placed on the head of the goat which was to be sacrificed, and a confession of the sins of the nation was made. A goat was offered and the blood sprinkled before God in the Most Holy Place (atonement, a sacrifice).
  - 2) The goat gave his life for the sins of the people, symbolizing the price paid for sin (ransom or redemption).
  - 3) The High Priest laid his hands on the head of the other goat and it was led outside to a wilderness area and released, symbolizing the removal or sending away of sin from the nation (remission).
  - 4) The complete ceremony symbolized God's forgiveness, leading to a remaking of the relationship (reconciliation).

Conclusion:

1. Sin, guilt, estrangement from God, forgiveness, etc. are fundamental components of the sacrificial system of the Old Testament, and play an important role in understanding what Christ did on the cross.
2. Each of these words, atonement, redemption, remission, ransom, and reconciliation will be discussed in the following chapters.

## Chapter IX

### Atonement, Remission, and Reconciliation

Introduction:

1. Because of the close relationship between the subject matter of this chapter and the previous chapter, there will be some necessary repetition.
2. The word atonement is frequently used as a sort of catch-all for the whole concept of sacrifice, forgiveness, propitiation, ransom, etc. The word atonement however, has a somewhat limited meaning, and its use is almost completely confined to the Old Testament.
3. In considering the words in this study, you will notice a great deal of overlapping, but also see that each has its particular area of emphasis.

#### I. The meaning of the Greek terms for atonement.

- A. The same Greek words are used in the Greek version of the Old Testament (LXX) and in the Greek New Testament.
  1. In the New Testament these words occur only about seven times but in the Hebrew Old Testament their equivalent words occur almost one hundred times.
  2. The subject of atonement however has its place in the New Testament as well as the Old Testament.
- B. The most common Greek words translated atonement come from the same root. These words are:
  1. **ἱλασκομαι** (*hilaskomai*). This is a verb, and is generally translated “to appease, to make atonement, to show mercy, to conciliate, to purge or purify, and to pardon.”
  2. **ἱλασμος** (*hilasmus*). This is a noun, and is generally translated “propitiation, expiation, or one who makes expiation.”
  3. **ἱλαστηριον** (*hilastērion*). This is a noun, and is generally translated “that which expiates or propitiates.” Each of these words shares a common root.
  4. The English words “propitiate, atonement, and expiate” are not usually part of the everyday vocabulary of the average person, so these will need definition in the light of the original words.
- C. Another group of words is also used.
  1. **καθαρος** (*katharos* – noun) and **καθαριζω** (*katharizō* – verb) are two words used in both the Old Testament and the New Testament to identify cleaning, purifying, or casting away that which is refuse or impure.

- a. These words are used in classical literature as well as the Bible to refer to objects which are cleansed, sicknesses which are cured, and that which has been made clear or transparent.
  - 1) They are used to describe the wheat which is separated from the chaff.
  - 2) They also describe a fine army which is unmixed with mercenaries or cowards.
- b. These words are often used concerning freedom from disease or a leper who has been cleansed as in Lev. 14:7.
- 2. These are not purely secular words, but sometimes refer to ceremonial religious practice, including ethical content.
  - a. Lev. 12:7 speaks of the purification of women, using this word, and translating it as atonement (KJV, ASV, RSV, and NIV).
  - b. Ps. 19:13 speaks of restraining oneself from presumptuous sins, and thus being clear (ASV), or innocent (KJV, RSV, NIV) of a great transgression.
  - c. In Job 8:6 it is used to refer to cleanliness or purity of heart.
- 3. The New Testament uses the word in a similar way.
  - a. In Jms. 1:27 the writer speaks of pure religion.
  - b. In Rom. 14:20 Paul speaks of things that are pure.
  - c. In Matt. 5:8 Jesus uses this word to describe the heart which is unmixed with insincere motives (pure in heart).
- 4. *καθαρίζω* (*katharizo*) is the root from which we get the English word “catharsis” meaning to purge fears and harmful residual thoughts from the mind in order to bring about a spiritual or emotional renewal.
- 5. One must keep in mind that the idea of purging, purifying, or cleansing runs through each of the various forms of all of the words discussed above.

## II. The meaning of atonement.

### A. Atonement in pagan religions.

- 1. The word means to appease, satisfy, expiate, purify, or purge.
- 2. Sacrifices and other rituals were parts of pagan practices performed in order to appease the gods’ wrath toward an offender, a group of people, or a nation.
- 3. When the gods were satisfied with the sacrifice or item of atonement (payment to a priest, temple, etc.) punishment was supposedly “dismissed.” The sin was thus expiated or purged, and the sinner was therefore considered purified or purged, and the gods were satisfied and appeased.
- 4. It should be noted that in that system, the anger of the gods was directed toward the sinner, and was a primary concern of the sinner.

5. The progression of “sin→guilt→punishment” was then supposedly broken, and the sinner was freed from punishment.

## B. Atonement in the Old Testament.

1. The meaning of the Greek words remains the same in both Old Testament and New Testament, but the direction of the wrath of God in the Bible is completely different from that in pagan religions. God loves the sinner but hates the sin.
2. The wrath of God then is directed toward the sin.
  - a. A sinner who refuses to return to God in repentance and change of life is punished, not because of God’s anger against the sinner, but because of the holiness of God and the ungodliness of the sinner caused by his ungodly behavior.
  - b. Still, the wrath of God is present because he cannot tolerate sin and evil.
  - c. The love of God is the reason that provisions were made for expiation, purging, purifying, etc.
3. The Biblical idea of atonement comes from the nature of God and the meaning of the covenant.
  - a. God was a faithful and holy God, and was a covenant partner with Israel.
  - b. His holiness was the basis of sin’s power to estrange man from God. The idea of purging sin from man or purifying man from sin (atonement) was the only way that man could once again enjoy this covenant relationship.
  - c. In Num. 35:33 the land is said to be polluted, and in need of cleansing or purging.
    - 1) The word **εξιλασθησονται** (*exilasthēsontai*) is used here.
    - 2) This is from the same root, **ἱλασμος** (*hilasmus*), as described above, but has the prefix **εξ** (*ex*) added, which means “away from.”
4. It does not present the idea that God needed to be pacified or appeased by sacrifice, but an act of atonement removed (purged) the barrier of sin which separated man from God. See Is. 59:1-2 where Isaiah says that the sins of the people had separated them from God.
  - a. God’s love for mankind caused him to initiate a means of expiation or purification (atonement) for the sinner so that the covenant relationship could be renewed.
  - b. Once again, it is important to remember that this atonement or purifying did not come as a result of man’s worthiness or the meritorious deeds of the sinner, but wholly from the love of God.
  - c. The importance and the necessity of atonement come from the fact that God is a God of holiness.

5. In this respect, the religion of Israel is seen in strong contrast to the paganism of the Canaanites and other ancient religions in which the gods' wrath against the sinner is appeased by sacrifice or other manifestations of devotion.
  - a. In pagan religions, the gods could be induced to bless the worshippers with rain, fertility, victory in war, or other benefits if the worshippers offered certain sacrifices or performed certain acts of service to the gods.
  - b. An example of this is seen in II Kings 3:26-27 where Mesha, the king of Moab, offered his son as a sacrifice so that the god Chemosh would give the Moabites the victory when they fought against Israel.
  - c. Those offerings then became a way for the worshipper to bargain with the gods (bribe?) in order to obtain favors.
  - d. Unfortunately this idea is also seen in some Christian misconceptions of prayer. ("God I'll come to church if you will do \_\_\_\_\_ for me," or "God heal my illness and I will be a faithful Christian," or "God if you will get me out of this problem I'll never \_\_\_\_\_ again.")
- C. In the New Testament atonement is inseparably linked to the death and resurrection of Jesus.
  1. As in the Old Testament, God always takes the initiative, and man's good works are never a part of atonement.
    - a. Atonement is a manifestation of God's grace and love, and can only be accomplished by God.
    - b. Man is never perceived as being *worthy* of God's salvation, but God always perceives him as being *worth* saving because he is the object of the unfathomable love of God. This is the reason Christ died.
  2. Rom. 3:21-31 gives profound enlightenment of this.

### III. Why is atonement necessary?

- A. Contemporary mankind and liberal theology.
  1. Modern man says, "Why do we need atonement anyway? Why not just let God forgive sinful man and be done with it."
  2. This also is an important principle of Islam.
    - a. Muslims contend that Allah has the power to forgive in any way he wants to. Therefore, by saying that atonement is necessary we supposedly limit God's power.
    - b. This ignores the cost of sin, God's justice, and the need of the vicarious sacrifice of Christ.

3. Concerning the Christian belief in God's free forgiveness an objection is often raised that, "If God's forgiveness is free, then why do we need an atoning sacrifice?"
  - a. We must remember that the Bible shows that from God's vantage point, forgiveness is not cheap. To consider it so is to manifest a basic misunderstanding of the nature and holiness of God and the nature and character of sin.
  - b. Some liberal theologians, particularly those of a generation ago, take this position.
  - c. They therefore do not look on the sacrifice of Christ as an atoning or redeeming sacrifice, but rather as the death of a martyr – a man willing to die for a cause in which he deeply believed.
    - 1) In 1903, Paul Wernle, a liberal theologian of the University of Basel (Switzerland) wrote, "How miserably all those finely constructed theories of sacrifice and vicarious atonement crumble to pieces before this faith in the love of God our Father, who so gladly pardons! The one parable of the Prodigal Son wipes them all off the slate." (Paul Wernle, *The Beginning of Christianity*, vol. I, p. 109, quoted by D.M. Baillie in *God Was in Christ*, p. 172.)
    - 2) Although Wernle's publication is over one hundred years old, it expresses a very basic liberal theological position which is still advocated in many circles. That is, there is no necessity of atonement because God is a God of love and forgiveness, not a God who demands a human sacrifice.

B. The cost of sin and man's needs.

1. Donald Baillie quotes Henri Heine, who, in 1881 wrote the phrase, "God will forgive me: that's his business." Heine did not believe in the necessity of atonement.
  - a. This illustrates the true danger of failing to understand the nature of divine forgiveness and the costliness of sin.
  - b. In this view, God is seen as an indulgent "father" who allows his children to live as they please, glossing over their faults no matter how serious those faults might be. Sin has no cost, and is not really taken seriously as having eternal consequences. Every loving human parent can see the fallacy in this reasoning.
  - c. From a practical point of view, God's anger at our sins is truly a manifestation of his love for us, because he knows that such a manner of life will destroy us in this life as well as that to come.

2. The nature of man demands atonement.

- a. When a serious infraction has occurred between two people, resulting in a severe break in their relationship, both the offended and the offender understand and feel the need for satisfaction.
  - 1) The offended person naturally feels that amends should be made by the offender if the offender has truly repented.
  - 2) But, whatever the terrible offense may be, both the offender and the offended know that work has to be done to reconcile and remake the relationship.
- b. True repentance is a change of heart – a change of attitude – which brings about a radical change in behavior. (It isn’t just “quitting your meanness.”)
  - 1) An important question which the offender entertains then is, “What can I do to right this terrible wrong which I have committed?” (The people on Pentecost, Acts 2:37, and Saul of Tarsus on the road to Damascus, Acts 22:10 certainly were experiencing this.)
  - 2) When the offender feels his guilt very deeply, and he is heart sick because a valuable relationship has been broken, he needs to see that the offended person shares in the seriousness of the situation. If the offended party treats this terrible wrong as if it were trivial, (“Oh, just forget it, it was nothing”), the offender goes away completely empty and unfulfilled because he cannot not experience the healing quality and power of true forgiveness and the remaking of the broken relationship.
- 3. Isaiah 53:1-12 speaks vividly of the vicarious character of the atonement provided through the blood of Christ.
- 4. The most unique quality of Christianity is that it is God, the offended one, who takes the initiative. It is God, the offended one who bears my shame and the burden of my guilt. It is God, the offended one who pays the price for my offense because I am powerless to pay the price for myself. This is the grandest manifestation of love that can be shown.

#### IV. What is the meaning of remission?

- A. The Greek word **ἀφεσίς** (*aphesis*), discussed in the previous chapter, is used in the LXX Old Testament, and the New Testament, and is translated “to send away, forgive, remit, or pardon.”
  - 1. This word is also used in a secular way.
    - a. It is frequently translated “to send away” (Ex. 18:2), “to leave” something or some one (Ex. 23:11), “to let go” of something (Lev. 16:26), or “to remit” a debt (Deut. 15:3).

- b. In Lev. 25:10 it is used regarding the release of land to the original owners in the year of Jubilee. This reference is sometimes translated “liberty” throughout the land.
2. It frequently has the meaning of remission or forgiveness as seen in the following passages.
  - a. When Moses interceded on behalf of Israel he asked God to “forgive” or “take away” the sins of the people (Ex. 34:9).
  - b. In speaking of the sin offering, the priest was to offer the sacrifice and God said the offeror would be “forgiven” (Lev. 4:31).
  - c. God told Moses he had “pardoned” “forgiven” the rebellious people when the spies returned from Canaan (Num. 14:20).
  - d. There are many other occurrences of this word in the Old Testament.

#### B. The Greek word in the New Testament.

1. The word is used in a secular sense in the New Testament when speaking of departing, dismissing, leaving alone, and deliverance.
2. It is frequently translated “forgiveness” or “remission” in the New Testament.
  - a. Jesus said that his blood was shed for “remission” – “forgiveness” of sins (Matt. 26:28).
  - b. John the Baptist baptized for “remission” – “forgiveness” of sins (Mk. 1:4).
  - c. In the song of Zechariah he said his son (John) would proclaim the knowledge of salvation through the “remission” – “forgiveness” of their sins.
  - d. Peter told the people on Pentecost that their baptism was for “remission” – “forgiveness” of sins (Acts 2:38).
  - e. There are other examples as well.

#### C. Summary.

1. From these references in both the Old Testament and the New Testament, it is evident that the basic meaning of the word is “to send away,” “to release,” to “remit” a debt, and to “forgive.”
2. In reference to sins, the word says they are sent away, removed, or left behind.

### V. What is the meaning of reconciliation?

#### A. Basic meaning of the word.

1. It is the act of bringing together two or more estranged parties, and bringing about harmony in action and attitudes.

2. Reconciliation is always man's reconciliation to God, not the other way around.
  - a. Reconciliation of man to man, or man to his own inner self, or man to his environment are not primary, although the Bible does not overlook the importance of these aspects of the word.
  - b. Modern day man wants God to become what man wants him to be, rather than "allowing" God to reveal himself as he is, and bending one's own will to the will and holiness of God.
3. In view of this fact, the Biblical idea of reconciliation is quite contrary to the secular interpretation of the word.
4. In reconciliation the relationship is restored, but this reconciliation is on God's terms not man's terms. In this process, the words atonement and reconciliation share some common ground.

#### B. Willful sins in the Old Testament.

1. Num. 15:30-31 describes the severity of willful or defiant sins. The literal translation is "with a high hand." These sins were considered especially dreadful under the Law of Moses.
  - a. Num. 15:22-31 shows a contrast between the sin offering in case of unintentional sins or sins of ignorance, and the high handed sins of defiance.
  - b. There was no sacrifice prescribed for such conduct.
  - c. The guilty party was to be cut off from the people, probably meaning that he no longer had any part in the Covenant.
  - d. Ps. 51 and Ez. 18 both deal with these types of situations, but it will be noticed that no sacrifice was prescribed. The Old Testament gives very little information about the "willful sinner," or the "presumptuous sinner."
    - 1) The writer of the 51<sup>st</sup> Psalm begs for cleansing, but he specifically speaks of the fact that no sacrifices are adequate here. See Ps. 51:10, 16-17.
    - 2) Notice that in Ezekiel, the prophet assures the true penitence must precede any thought of forgiveness.
    - 3) The student may want to consult Heb. 10:26-29 where the writer deals with the severity of deliberate sin.
  - e. Num. 15:30-31 deals with the man who deliberately violated the Sabbath by going out to gather wood on the Sabbath. He was put to death. The statement immediately preceding this incident speaks of the defiant sinner.

Conclusion:

1. Punishment for sin is not the point. Alienation from God is the point.

2. The Old Testament concept of atonement comes into the New Testament under Christ.
3. A more nearly complete picture of the whole process is seen in the cross, but this is foreshadowed in the doctrine of atonement vividly portrayed in the Old Testament sacrificial system.

## Chapter X

### Ransom and Redemption

Introduction:

1. The words ransom and redemption are closely related.
2. In this chapter we want to see the origin of the idea of ransom and redemption as well as their application in the sacrificial system and the God-man relationship.

#### I. The relationship and meaning of ransom and redemption.

##### A. The use of the words in Old Testament.

1. The Greek words **λυτρόν** (*lutron*), **λυτροῦ** (*lutroō*), and **λυτρωσίς** (*lutrōsis*) are used in the LXX, in the New Testament, and also in Greek classical literature.
2. These words are sometimes translated “redeem or redemption” and sometimes “ransom.” They are, therefore almost interchangeable.
  - a. See the following references where the word is translated “ransom.” Ex. 21:30, Num 3:46, Num. 35:31. There are many other references where the word is translated “ransom.”
  - b. See the following references where the same word is translated “redeem or redemption.” Ex. 34:20, Lev. 25:25, Num. 18:17. There are many other references in which the word is translated “redeem.”
3. The Greek word **εξαγοράζω** (*exagorazō*) occurs only about six times in the LXX Old Testament, and is usually translated, “to lead out or lead away, or to buy up.” It occurs about four times in the New Testament, and is generally translated “redeem.”
4. Although these words usually refer to sin and the price paid for forgiveness, they are also used in a secular or legal way in the Old Testament.

- B. Other uses of **λυτρόν** (*lutron*), **λυτροῦ** (*lutroō*), and **λυτρωσίς** (*lutrosis*) in the LXX.
  1. The words are sometimes used in a bad sense referring to payment of a “bribe” or money paid to another person in order to settle a wrong done by an offender.
    - a. These uses are not religious in nature, but have to do with payment made in order to secure liberty or release.
    - b. Below are three secular uses of the word.

- 1) Prov. 6:34-35. A jealous husband will not accept a “pay-off, or bribe” by one who has committed adultery with his unfaithful wife.
- 2) Ex. 21:30. The Law of Moses stated that if a bull killed a person, and it was known that the owner knew the bull had a habit of goring but the owner did not keep the bull penned up, the owner had to forfeit his own life. However, he could *redeem* himself by the payment of whatever was demanded.
- 3) Num. 35:31. This passage forbids acceptance of a ransom (“pay-off” or “bribe”) for the life of a murderer who deserves to die. That is, they are not allowed to pay a price for the freedom of the murderer. This demonstrates the basic meaning of the word.

2. The word is also used as a legal term which refers to the price paid for liberty for a slave.
  - a. Ex. 6:6 speaks of God’s act of redeeming Israel from Egyptian slavery.
  - b. Lev. 25:25 speaks of property being redeemed by the nearest relative of a poor person who has had to sell it.
  - c. In Ps. 59:2 the verb form is translated “to deliver.”
3. Since the word carries the basic idea of a “price paid,” it is sometimes translated “atonement.”

C. The use of *λυτρόν* (*lutron*), *λυτρώω* (*lutroō*), and *λυτρωσίς* (*lutrosis*) in the New Testament.

1. Although these words, all of which come from the same root, appear only about nine times in the New Testament, their meaning is fundamental to the proper understanding of the mission of Jesus.
2. The mission of Jesus is defined by his work. His work centered on ransom and redemption.
  - a. Matt. 20:28. Jesus says he will give his life as a ransom.
  - b. Lk. 24:21. The verb form (*λυτρώω*) is used when two of the apostles on the road to Emmaus spoke of their hopes that Jesus would be the one who would redeem Israel.
  - c. I Pet. 1:18 uses this word to say we have been redeemed, not with corruptible things but with the incorruptible blood of Jesus.
  - d. Words from the same root appear in both Old Testament and New Testament, and are translated redeemed, redemption, delivered, ransom, or payment.

## II. A closer look at the meaning of the words.

### A. Examples of redemption paid.

1. The exodus from Egypt.
  - a. Ex. 15:13. “You will lead the people you have redeemed.”
  - b. The redemption price was paid, not by the people, but by God. The sacrifice of the Passover lamb symbolized this redemption.
2. The ransom money at the time of a census.
  - a. Ex. 30:12-16. In verse 12, the word *λυτρόν* (*lutron*) is used, and is translated “ransom.” When referring to the results of this ransom money, in verse 16, the word *εξιλασμός* (*exliasmos*), translated atonement, is used.
  - b. This shows the close relationship of the ideas presented in these words.
3. Sacrifice and ransom.
  - a. Sacrifice was seen as a covering for sin, and in that sense was an atonement which was the result of the payment of ransom.
  - b. This idea is inseparably connected to the Messiah who was to come as a redeemer (one who “buys back”), and the one who gave his life as a ransom (emphasis on the price paid), and by this means he paid the price for our atonement.
  - c. An animal pays with its life (is offered as a ransom) for the sins of the offeror. See Is. 53 for a more complete description of a vicarious sacrifice.

B. It is clear to see that ransom and redemption both carry the idea of a price being paid for release or freedom.

1. Paul uses this to express the fact that Christ paid the price of our redemption.
  - a. I Cor. 6:20. “You were bought at a price.”
  - b. Rom. 3:24. Paul says that our salvation is “Through the redemption (*ἀπολυτρωσεως*-(*apolutroseōs*) that came by Christ.” This is a compound Greek word made up of *ἀπό* (*apo*), meaning “from or away” and *λυτρόν* (*lutron*) the commonly used word for “redemption,” or to pay the price for one’s liberation. Thus the word means “the price paid for buying us back” from the guilt of sin.
2. Notice also the connection Paul makes between forgiveness and redemption.
  - a. Eph. 1:7. “In him we have redemption through his blood, the forgiveness of sins.” Redemption and forgiveness are linked, but they are not the same.
  - b. Col. 1:14. “In whom we have redemption, the forgiveness of sins.”
3. In all of these uses we see the principle that redemption and ransom come as payment for the liberation or setting free of an individual.

- a. In the New Testament these figures of speech come from the ransom of payment made to purchase the freedom of slaves.
- b. There is a strong Greek and Roman background here.
- c. A Roman slave could gain his freedom in four different ways.
  - 1) A slave could save his own money, and buy his own freedom by paying his owner. This was extremely rare and almost impossible for a slave.
  - 2) The price of freedom could be paid by another person.
  - 3) Freedom could be granted to the slave if he did some notoriously good deed for the owner or a high governmental official.
  - 4) In rare cases a generous and benevolent master may free a slave, particularly if the slave showed high intelligence and promise. The Roman philosopher Epictetus had been a slave, but was freed by his master.

Conclusion:

- 1. The importance of ransom or redemption from sin is emphasized throughout the Bible.
- 2. In order to understand the true meaning of Christ's mission it is necessary to understand the meaning of the words translated redemption and ransom.

## **Chapter XI**

### **Sexual Laws and the Sanctity of Marriage**

Introduction:

1. It is important for the student to review Chapter II, “The Ten Commandments” concerning the idolatrous practices of the pagan Middle Eastern nations, and read Lev. 18:1-30 and Lev. 20:10-24. Portions of this chapter contain information similar to that found in Chapter II.
2. Sexual regulations tend to guard the sanctity of marriage, but they also place strong emphasis on the importance of sexual purity among the unmarried.
3. It is important for us to understand some of the sexual practices of the ancient pagan nations in order to see the contrast and meaning of the sexual regulations under the Law of Moses.
  - a. In Lev. 18:1-5 and Lev. 20:1-5, 22-24, God told the Israelites that they were not to practice the behavior of the Egyptians or the nations which he would drive out of Canaan.
  - b. This is said in the context of the sexual regulations in Lev. 18 and Lev. 20.
4. Current attitudes and practices in many parts of the world today, demonstrate how important it is that we understand these principals.

I. Sexual practices of ancient pagan nations of the Middle East.

- A. The cultic worship of the “mother goddess.”
  1. She was the goddess of fertility, and personified the blessings of fertility in vegetable life, animal life, and human life.
  2. The mother-goddess was supposedly accompanied by a young god who periodically died and came back to life just as vegetation died out in the fall and winter and revived in the spring and summer.
    - a. The young god supposedly died in a variety of ways, depending on the particular cult. He may be killed by another god, by a wild animal, by suicide, by burning to death or drowning.
    - b. As a result of his death, the world became infertile and ceased to produce.
  3. The consort of this young “dead” god mourned his death and searched for him.
    - a. Upon revival and resurrection of the young “dead” god, fertility returned to vegetable, animal, and human life.
    - b. This cycle was repeated each year.

B. Mesopotamian families of gods and goddesses.

1. El was the head of the family of gods among pagan western Semitic nations. He was generally represented by a bull. His wife was Asherah.
2. Asherah bore about seventy gods and goddesses, the most important of whom was Baal, a name meaning “lord.” The Syrians called him Hadad. Remember that the throne name for the king of Syria was “Ben-Hadad” meaning “the son of Hadad.”
  - a. Baal is represented as the god who controlled the storms and rains, resulting in his control over vegetation. Remember Elijah’s experience with the prophets of Baal at Mt. Carmel.
  - b. Baal was then considered the “lord of heaven and earth,” and his wife, Ashtoreth, became the goddess of love and fertility.
    - 1) Ashtoreth was known in Syria as Anath, a goddess who loved war.
    - 2) Canaanite poems were written about her bloody exploits with humans. At one time she was said to have been wading in blood up to her neck.
  - c. The god Mot (Death) was the arch-enemy of Baal. He murdered Baal, only to have him come to life again in the spring. The Canaanites used this myth as a means of explaining the weather and agricultural cycles. In times of droughts, one can see how Israel could fall victim to the Canaanite myth of Baal as the god of rain and storms.
  - d. Asherah, the wife of El and mother goddess, was symbolized by a wooden pole (Asherah pole as in Judg. 6:25-26), the stump of a tree, or a grove.
3. It is important to understand that the Canaanite gods had no sense of morality, nor did their worshippers have such sensitivities. (Worshippers tend to become like that which they worship.)
  - a. The combination of fertility, love, war, and a complete lack of morality made for a destructive culture, and one of depraved sexual behavior.
  - b. The fertility rites consisted of public sexual performances of various sorts usually between the king and priestess or between the priests and priestesses. The worship of Baal and Asherah also engaged the worshippers themselves in these sexual performances. Many of these practices consisted of religious prostitution and homosexuality.
  - c. The lack of morals in the Canaanite religious practices became attractive to Israel, because the gods and goddesses approved of sexual perversions and other forms of sexual immorality. This gave license to all sorts of illicit behavior with little discipline or restrictions.
  - d. Israel adopted many of these thought patterns and terms so we find that many cities and persons were named after some of the Canaanite gods. This was done by attaching “baal” to a name as either a prefix or suffix. See Jud. 6:32, II Sam. 13:23.

- e. Child sacrifice followed these things.
  - 1) “Shall I give my first-born for my transgression, the fruit of my body for the sin of my soul?” Micah 6:7
  - 2) God warned against the worship of Molech in which child sacrifice was observed, but a number of the kings of Israel fell victim to this practice. See I Sam. 11:5, II Kgs. 21:1-6, II Kgs. 23:13
- f. Sacred prostitution, male and female, was also practiced among these pagan nations, and Israel also began to practice these things. See I Kings 14:22-24.

4. In Babylon, the myths of creation gave rise to very bizarre accounts of the wars between the gods and goddesses leading to the creation of the world.
  - a. Apsu (male god) and his wife Tiamat (female goddess) generated a variety of gods and goddesses. When strife arose among these offspring, Apsu decided to destroy them, but his plot was discovered by the great father god Ea who killed Apsu.
  - b. Tiamat, the surviving wife of Apsu was urged to generate an army of gods and goddesses to attack Ea. Marduk was god of Babylon, and the son of Ea.
  - c. A battle ensued between Tiamat and her army against the armies of Ea and Marduk. Tiamat was killed in that battle, and Marduk took her corpse and out of it created our cosmos – our universe.
5. The conflicts, wars, and general destructive character of the gods of Canaan and Babylon meant that their worshippers had to placate or appease the anger of the gods.
  - a. This played a part in Israel’s departure from God to worship the gods of the nations around them.
  - b. Such practice also led Israel into depraved sexual practices, contrary to Lev. 18, 20.

C. Warning concerning the religious/sexual practices of the inhabitants of Canaan.

1. God warned Israel not to follow the customs of either the Egyptians or the Canaanites.
2. Because of the long slavery in Egypt, Israel could be easily lured into following some of the Egyptian religious customs. When Israel entered Canaan and made treaties with its inhabitants the Canaanites, with their lack of sexual morality, lured God’s people away from the sexual purity taught in the Law.
3. The statement in Lev. 18:6 sets the basic principle against sexual relations with a near relative – incest.

II. Warnings to Israel concerning immoral sexual practices. Lev. 18:1-29

A. Lev. 18:7-13 describes laws prohibiting sexual relations with a near relative. The following sexual relations were prohibited:

1. With one's own mother (18:7). Throughout this chapter some of the language refers to families with multiple wives.
2. With a father's wife (18:8).
3. With a sister (18:9). This can apply to a half sister or a full sister. Marrying one's sister (full sister or half sister) was an accepted practice among the Egyptian royalty.
4. With a granddaughter (18:10).
5. With a sister (18:11). This specifies "the daughter of your father's wife" stating that she is your sister. There appears to be some overlapping with 18: 9.
6. With a paternal aunt (18:12). She is identified as a "close relative."
7. With a maternal aunt (18:13). She is identified in the same way.

B. Lev. 18:14-17a regulates close family relationships which do not involve blood relatives. Sexual relationships are prohibited with:

1. An aunt who is the wife of your father's brother though not a blood relative. (18:14).
2. A daughter-in-law (18:15).
3. A sister-in-law (18:16).
  - a. There was an exception to this in the case of levirate marriage, that is, where a man dies without leaving an heir. See Deut. 25:5-10
  - b. The marriage of Boaz and Ruth illustrates this. See Ruth 3-4.
4. With a mother and her daughter (18:17a)

C. Lev. 18:17b-23. Regulations against certain marriages and other sexual conduct.

1. Against marriage to a woman and her granddaughter (18:17b). These are described as "close relatives."
2. Against marriage to a wife's sister (18:18). The situation of Jacob, Leah, and Rachel naturally comes to mind, but it must be remembered that that took place about three hundred years before the Law of Moses was given.
3. Against sexual relations with a woman during menses (18:19).
4. Against sexual relations with a neighbor's wife (18:20).
5. Against male homosexuality (18:22).
6. Against bestiality, male and female (18:23).

D. Punishments for violations of the sexual regulations. Lev. 20:10-24

1. Violations which incurred the death penalty. 20:10-16

- a. Adultery. Both were put to death. 20:10
- b. Sexual relations with your father's wife (stepmother). Both were put to death. 20:11
- c. Sexual relations with your daughter-in-law. Both were put to death. 20:12
- d. Male homosexual relations. Both were put to death. 20:13
- e. A man who marries a woman and also her mother. Both are to be burned with fire. 20:14
  - 1) This punishment is not completely clear.
  - 2) It is probably speaking of the death penalty (usually stoning) for all three parties, and that the corpses were not to be given a formal burial, but they were to be burned.
- f. Bestiality (a male having a sexual relationship with an animal). 20:15. Both the man and the animal are to be put to death.
- g. Bestiality (a female having a sexual relationship with an animal). 20:16. Both the woman and the animal are to be put to death.

2. Punishments other than the death penalty. 20:17-21

- a. Marriage to a sister, the daughter of either his father or his mother. 20:17. It is a disgrace, and they are both to be cut off from the people.
  - 1) This is somewhat unclear, but is probably stating that they can no longer be part of God's covenant with Israel.
  - 2) This was to be done in the sight of all.
- b. Sexual relations with a woman during her menses. 20:18. Both are to be cut off from the people.
- c. Sexual relations with a sister of either your mother or father. 20:19. Both are to be held responsible.
  - 1) This seems to be directed particularly to a non-blood related aunt because blood-related aunts are deal with in verse 20.
  - 2) No further explanation of this punishment is given.
- d. Sexual relations with an aunt. 20:20. They will die childless.
- e. Man who marries his brother's wife (sister-in-law). 20:21. They will die childless.

E. Another general warning comes at the end of chapter 20 concerning the practices of the other nations. 20:22-27.

III. Prostitution. The lack of Levitical laws against prostitution should not be construed as any kind of approval since there are many passages where the practice is severely condemned.

A. Some references to prostitutes in Old Testament.

1. Josh. 2. Rahab was a prostitute in Jericho.
2. Judg. 11:1. Jephthah was the son of a prostitute.
3. Lev. 21:7. Priests were not allowed to marry prostitutes.
4. Lev. 19:29. Israelites were warned not to make their daughters prostitutes.
5. Lev. 21:9. A priest's daughter who became a prostitute was to be burned.
6. Prov. 7:6-27. This is a vivid description of the pitfalls presented by prostitutes to young men.

B. There are many symbolic uses of the term to describe Israel's infidelity to God and their idolatry. The two below are typical of such descriptions.

1. Hos. 1-2. Israel's unfaithfulness to God is symbolized as prostitution.
2. Jer. 5:7. Israel's infidelity is like adultery and prostitution.

Conclusion:

1. There are other references to sexual sins found in the Old Testament history section, prophetic writings, and the wisdom literature.
2. Sexual sins were particularly evil because they characterized so much of the heathen practices of the nations around Israel, and they basically violated the sanctity of the home and marriage. Sexual perversion was condemned.
3. Divorce was never part of God's plan, and Jesus dealt with it in Matt. 19:1-12.
4. Polygamy was permitted from very early times, and is not directly dealt with in the Law of Moses.
5. Some of Jesus' statements in Matt. 19 could be applied to polygamy as well as divorce.

## **Chapter XII** **Miscellaneous Laws**

Introduction:

1. The Law of Moses was designed to regulate just about every aspect of the life of Israel.
2. The sacrificial system entered into almost all of the laws in one way or another. Therefore we could almost say that the sacrificial system was at the very core of the Law.
3. However the Law was not designed as a sort of “plan of salvation” for Israel, nor was it to be permanent. During New Testament times Israel’s misunderstanding of this led Paul to write extensively about it.
4. In addition to the laws already discussed, there were many other areas of regulations.
  - a. Among these miscellaneous laws were those pertaining to dietary regulations, ceremonial cleanliness and uncleanness, divorce, civil law, criminal law, and laws dealing with slavery.
  - b. Some of these will be discussed in this lesson. For a longer list, see Appendix A, “The Law of Moses.”

### **II. Cleanliness and uncleanness.**

#### **A. Laws dealing with uncleanness of persons and objects.**

1. It should be noted that certain kinds of uncleanness were associated with sin, but other uncleanness was not.
  - a. Examples of this are seen in the case of skin diseases which had nothing to do with sin, and certain normal bodily discharges which made a person unclean.
  - b. Some of these laws appear to have been instituted for health reasons, but certainly not all of them fall into this category.
  - c. In some cases a sacrifice was required to become ceremonially clean, while in other cases a person might simply be “unclean until evening.” See Lev. 15 concerning some of these situations.
2. Lev. 5:2-3. When a person touched an unclean object or unclean person, that individual became unclean.
3. Num. 5:1-4. Certain diseased persons, those who touched a dead body, and people who had certain bodily discharges were considered unclean.
4. Lev. 13-14. These two chapters deal with those who displayed certain raw sores and infectious skin conditions who were considered unclean.

- a. It should be noted that the word “leprosy” was used to identify a number of skin diseases, and was not confined to the particular disease known today as leprosy.
- b. When a person was cured, or the symptoms disappeared he was readmitted into society. However, certain sacrifices and cleansing rituals had to be observed. This was practiced in New Testament times. See Lev. 14:1-33, Matt. 8:1-4.
- c. Persons infected with these skin diseases were put outside the camp in order that others might not become defiled or infected.

B. Clean and unclean instructions prior to the Law of Moses.

- 1. Dietary instructions and regulations in the antediluvian period.

  - a. Gen. 2:29-30. At creation, God told Adam, “I give you every seed-bearing plant on the face of the whole earth and every tree that has fruit with seed in it. They will be yours for food.” He also gave these food items to the animal population.
  - b. No specific prohibition against eating meat is mentioned in the antediluvian period, but it is generally assumed that it was not until after the flood that consumption of meat was begun.

- 2. When Noah was preparing to enter the ark there was some sort of distinction made between clean and unclean animals.

  - a. In Gen. 7:2-9 God told Noah to take seven pairs of clean animals (see vs. 8), and only one pair of unclean animals into the ark.
  - b. This is the first time any such distinction is made, and there is no explanation given concerning the criteria.

- 3. In Gen. 9:1-4 God gives permission for Noah to eat meat. “Everything that lives and moves will be food for you. Just as I gave you the green plants, I now give you everything. But you must not eat meat that has its life-blood still in it.”

  - a. There are no prohibitions given here concerning eating both clean and unclean meat.
  - b. The prohibition against eating meat which had the blood in it was also incorporated in the Law of Moses.

- 4. Many religions of the world have some sort of doctrines concerning “clean and unclean” foods, particularly meat. This is not a part of Christianity however.

  - a. Many of these regulations have to do with ceremony rather than sanitation. However, under primitive conditions, hygienic cautions may have been

part of the criteria.

- b. In pagan religions certain objects were considered unclean and a threat to human beings. Consequently numerous superstitions arose concerning some of these objects.

C. Rules in the Law of Moses concerning clean and unclean food.

- 1. Lev. 11:1-47, Lev. 17:15, Deut. 14:3-21. Any animal which died of itself was unclean, and anyone who touched or ate it was unclean. An animal which was killed by another animal was unclean.
- 2. Deut. 14:4-5. Certain animals were specified as clean such as the ox, sheep, goat, and antelope.
- 3. The basic law defining a clean animal was twofold.
  - a. An animal which chewed the cud and had a split hoof was considered clean.
  - b. Note that both of these provisions were required for an animal to be considered clean.
- 4. Water creatures were clean if they had fins and scales. Otherwise they were unclean.
- 5. Lev. 11: 13 -19 lists certain birds which were unclean. Most of those listed are birds of prey, flesh-eaters or scavengers.
- 6. Lev. 11:20-23 lists certain insects which are clean, and therefore edible. Those which walk on four feet were unclean, but some exceptions were made including locust, grasshopper, and cricket.
- 7. Lev. 11:29-38 gives a description and lists of certain reptiles and ground crawling animals which were not to be eaten.
- 8. For an unclean person to be ceremonially cleansed, a variety of ritual sacrifices and other practices were required. These are usually stated at the same place where the definitions of clean animals, objects, or practices are given.

III. Criminal and civil laws.

A. Crime and punishment among the Canaanites compared with Israel.

- 1. Because Israel's laws came from God, the view of crime and punishment was somewhat different from the views taken by neighboring countries.
  - a. Part of this view was that if the community did not punish the criminal, God would punish the nation.
  - b. See Lev. 18:24-29. The Canaanites allowed such gross immorality that God said they had polluted the land and this was one of the reasons they were driven out.

- 1) Since the Canaanite gods did not have a sense of morality (the gods killed each other, committed adultery, etc.) there was not a sense of sin connected with crimes. They were only violations of the rights, property, or lives of others.
- 2) With Israel, criminal and other immoral acts were not only violations against the rights, property, and lives of others, but these acts were also sins against God.

2. This demonstrates the true character of the theocratic nature of Israel.
  - a. In Israel, when crimes were punished, particularly in the case of capital crimes, it had the effect of purging the land.
  - b. This is also said concerning purging the land of idolatry and witchcraft.

B. Crimes punishable by death.

1. Some crimes against God and the religion of Israel were punishable by stoning. Here are some examples.
  - a. Worshipping other gods and child sacrifice. Idolatry was thought of as a sort of treason against the theocracy, and spiritual adultery. It was punishable by stoning to death. Ex. 20:3-5, Lev. 20:2-5, Deut. 13:6-11.
  - b. Magic and divination, including sorcery. Ex. 22:18, Deut. 18:9-13
  - c. Blasphemy, cursing God. Lev. 24:10-16.
2. Homicide.
  - a. Gen. 9:6 states the general principle concerning the death penalty for murder. "Whoever sheds the blood of man, by man shall his blood be shed, for in the image of God has God made man."
  - b. Murder. This was understood as intentional killing, and the murderer was to be put to death. Num. 35:16-21.
  - c. Num. 35:22-28 makes provision for one who accidentally or unintentionally kills another person.
    - 1) The accused had to flee to a city of refuge, where he had to remain until the death of the high priest. The avenger of blood could not touch him as long as he was there.
    - 2) However, if the guilty person went outside of the city of refuge, the avenger of blood could kill him without being guilty of murder.
3. Goring death by an animal.
  - a. Ex. 21:28-32 gives extensive regulations when a person is killed by an animal owned by another.
  - b. Under some circumstances the owner of the animal was not responsi-

ble, but the animal had to be stoned, and the meat was not to be eaten.

- c. If the animal killed a person, but the animal was known to be dangerous – had gored people before – and the owner did not keep the animal penned up, the animal was to be stoned and the owner was to be put to death.
  - 1) In such case however, if money was demanded, the owner could redeem himself by paying whatever was demanded.
  - 2) Differing circumstances brought some variations in this law.
- 4. For laws concerning justifiable homicide and crimes involving property see Ex. 21:12-27, Ex. 22:1-15.

C. Divorce.

- 1. It is generally thought that a woman had no rights of divorce since the Law made no provisions concerning them.
  - a. Deut. 22:13-19, 28-29. Some prohibitions were placed on certain marriage situations which absolutely prohibited a man from divorcing his wife.
    - 1) One of these was falsely accusing her of unchastity prior to their marriage, and another was the rape of a virgin, in which case the rapist was required to marry her.
    - 2) In both of these cases divorce was never allowed.
  - b. In Matt. 19:8 Jesus says that divorce was allowed by Moses because of people's hardness of heart.
- 2. Deut. 24:1 states, "If a man marries a woman who becomes displeasing to him because he finds something indecent about her, and he writes her a certificate of divorce, gives it to her and sends her from his house . . ."
  - a. This passage has been variously interpreted through the centuries.
  - b. During the time of Christ there lived two very famous rabbis. One was named Shammai, and the other Hillel. Shammai was very conservative and legalistic in his view of the Law, and Hillel was very liberal. Josephus refers to both of these men.
    - 1) Rabbi Shammai. He was an engineer, and was a strict constructionist with reference to the Jewish Law. A story, possibly only a legend, is told concerning Shammai and Hillel.
      - a) A Gentile supposedly came to Shammai and offered to convert to Judaism if Shammai could teach him the whole Law while he stood on one foot. In anger, Shammai drove him away with a

stick.

- b) Shammai believed that the phrase “something indecent – unclean – in her” (Deut. 24:1) referred only to her infidelity and nothing else. Even if a man’s wife was “as wicked as Jezebel,” but was not guilty of adultery, he could not divorce her.

2) Rabbi Hillel. He was very liberal in his view of the Law.

- a) As the legend goes, the same Gentile who had approached Shammai came to Hillel making the same request concerning converting to Judaism.
- b) Hillel’s reply was. “That which is hateful to you, do not do to your neighbor. That is the whole Torah [Law]; the rest is commentary. Go and study it.” The Gentile, according to the legend, converted to Judaism under Hillel.
- c) Hillel believed that Deut. 24:1 taught that a man could divorce his wife for any reason, even as inconsequential as serving him food which was cool instead of warm.

3. In Mal. 2:15-16, the prophet speaks to the Jews who had returned from Babylonian Exile and were practicing divorce. He represents God saying, “I hate divorce.”

Conclusion:

1. There were various other laws regulating usury, vows, pledges, inheritance, military service, judicial provisions, and other areas of life.
2. Brief summaries of these can be found in Appendix A, “The Law of Moses.”
3. It is important to understand the theocratic nature of these sections of the Law so that one can appreciate the relationship of violation, sin, guilt, and the sacrificial system.

## Chapter XIII

### The Purposes of the Law

Introduction:

1. The question of the purpose of the Law gave rise to the most serious internal controversy which faced the first century church.
2. Paul fully addressed this question in Romans and Galatians, and mentions it in most of his other letters.
3. In this chapter we want to look at both sides of the question, and address misunderstandings of the purposes of the Law as well as the Biblical teaching on the topic.
4. In order to understand the New Testament teaching concerning grace, faith, works, and justification, it is necessary to understand the nature, function, and purposes of law, not just the Law of Moses, but of any law.

#### I. What was NOT the purpose and designed of the Law.

##### A. The Law was not designed to change or annul the promise to Abraham.

1. Gal. 3:15-18. Here Paul begins his discussion of the covenant with Abraham and the function of the Law of Moses.
  - a. He begins with a comparison between the promises God made to Abraham and the inviolability a human covenant.
  - b. After a covenant is duly established (confirmed, ratified, duly executed) no one can add to it or set it aside. See Chapter I where types of covenants are discussed.
    - 1) In the passage under consideration Paul is referring to the covenant (promise) made to Abraham in Gen. 12:1-7, which God explained further in Gen. 22:17-18.
    - 2) Paul calls attention to the fact that Genesis uses the singular word translated “seed” (**σπερματί**) (*spermati*), dative singular, rather than the plural word translated “seeds” (**σπερμασίν**) (*spermasisin*), dative plural. He contends that by using the singular rather than the plural, the promise to Abraham applied to the coming of Christ, not to the formation of the nation of Israel.
  - c. He concludes this part of the argument by saying that the Law of Moses, which came 430 years later, did not offset or set aside this promise of God.
2. The implications of this statement bear directly on the concept held by many Jews of Paul’s day concerning the permanence and function of the Law. This will be addressed further in a later section.

- a. By understanding the Jewish concept here we can see how some would view the Law as an essential part of the covenant God made with Abraham.
  - b. Paul shows that this was not the case, and in fact, such a change would not even be allowed in a human covenant of this type.
  - c. Therefore the Law of Moses did not change anything in the promise to Abraham which stated that in his (Abraham's) seed all of the families of the earth would be blessed. That seed was Christ.
3. Notice that Paul says that the Law did not disannul the covenant God made with Abraham. The Law had a different purpose.

B. The Law was NOT designed to be an Old Testament “plan of salvation.”

1. Salvation was not its purpose. In the very nature of things no kind of law could bring salvation because law cannot forgive.
2. This principle blends into the next topic.

C. The Law was NOT designed to bring justification to the violator.

1. Rom. 3:20 states that “no one will be declared righteous in his sight by observing the law.”
2. Many of the Jews of Paul’s day looked at obedience to the Law as their means of justification – creating a right relationship with God.
  - a. This concept had the effect of replacing the doctrine of salvation by faith with the doctrine of salvation by works.
  - b. Seeking justification by works is legalism.
    - 1) The term “legalism” is not the same as the phrase “strict obedience to law.” Instead, legalism comes from the belief that obedience to the Law is the means of justification before God. If such were the case, justification would be the product of the work of man, rather than the grace of God.
    - 2) This should not be confused with James’ emphasis on a working faith which is perfectly compatible with Paul’s statements about salvation by faith.
    - 3) In the nature of things, salvation by works of law is impossible.
3. If justification could come by obedience to the Law, there would be no need for the sacrifice of Christ.

## II. Purposes of the Law.

### A. To reveal God.

1. Frequently in the Law of Moses, when God enjoined a commandment or practice he concluded with an expression affirming his own holiness.
  - a. Lev. 11:44-45. “Consecrate yourselves and be holy, because I am holy ... I am the Lord who brought you up out of Egypt to be your God; therefore be holy because I am holy.”
  - b. The use of the word “holy” throughout the Law shows that this is a characteristic of God. His holiness is uniquely revealed in the Law.
2. Some objects are designated as “holy.” A few of these are mentioned below:
  - a. The Tabernacle had a “Holy Place” and a “Most Holy Place.”
  - b. Ex. 28:36. The gold plate worn by the high priest bore the inscription, “Holy to the Lord.”
  - c. Ex. 29:37. The altar was to be “most holy.”
  - d. Ex. 31:13. “I am the Lord who makes you holy.”
3. God’s love, as well as other characteristics, is demonstrated in the Law.
  - a. Ex. 20:6. In giving the commandment against idolatry, God said he shows “love to a thousand generations of those who love me and keep my commandments.”
  - b. Ex. 34:6-7. “The LORD, the LORD, the compassionate and gracious God, slow to anger, abounding in love and faithfulness, maintaining love to thousands, and forgiving wickedness, rebellion and sin.”
  - c. Deut. 7:12-13. “If you pay attention to these laws and are careful to follow them, then the LORD your God will keep his covenant of love with you, as he swore to your forefathers. He will love you and bless you and increase your numbers.”
4. God’s willingness to forgive is demonstrated in the Law.
  - a. Lev. 4:20. “In this way the priest will make atonement for them, and they will be forgiven.”
  - b. Num. 14:19-21. “In accordance with your great love, forgive the sin of these people, just as you have pardoned them from the time they left Egypt until now. The LORD replied, ‘I have forgiven them, as you asked.’”
  - c. Num. 15:28. “When atonement has been made for him, he will be forgiven.”

B. To bring a consciousness of sin.

1. Rom. 3:20. “Therefore no one will be declared righteous in his sight by observing the law; rather, through the law we became conscious of sin.”

- a. Notice the contrast here. Paul first speaks of what the law did not do, then he states one of its purposes.
  - b. The nature and function of any kind of law is to define. Law can never forgive. This is true, not only of the Law of Moses, but of any law, religious or secular.
2. Some of the Pharisees during the first century looked to the law as a sort of savior. That is, they believed that justification (righteousness) came through strict adherence to the Law, particularly the ceremonial portions as interpreted through the traditions. They believed that they gained merit by keeping the Law. This is also a very strong belief of Islam.
  - a. The parable of the Pharisee and the publican in Lk. 18:10-14 demonstrates this principle. Notice how this story begins: “To some who were confident of their own righteousness, and looked down on everyone else Jesus told this parable.”
  - b. The Old Testament law was designed to bring Israel face to face with the guilt of sin. Sin is not just an inconsequential violation of a religious code, but it is serious rebellion against God.
3. Another facet of this is that obedience to law does not remove (forgive) the guilt of past infractions.
  - a. Even when forgiven, the violation does not go away. It stands as a historic fact.
  - b. Present and future obedience to law does not forgive those past violations.
    - 1) The general tendency today, as in the first century, is to suppose that one’s present goodness can outweigh his past badness. Present goodness then becomes a sort of substitute for forgiveness by overriding guilt and consequences.
      - a) This overlooks the Biblical teaching that sin has a severe cost which cannot be paid simply by reforming one’s life, even though such reformation is necessary.
      - b) The sacrifice of Christ, not the sacrifice of animals, is the only way this debt could be paid.
    - 2) Law of any kind is designed to point out what is allowable and what is not allowable – what is in bounds and what is out of bounds.
  4. Rom. 7:7-25 also addresses this principle, but from a different point of view.
    - a. Paul uses the diatribe here in anticipation of an objection. Some one may object that, “The Law is really evil itself, because it serves to point out sin. If we did not have the Law we would not be thought of as sinners.” Paul

shows that the law is not sin, but it is through the law that one becomes aware of sin. This awareness is necessary.

- 1) He illustrates this by referring to the commandment against coveting – greed.
- 2) He would not have known that coveting was sin, except that the Law forbade it, thus defining the violation.
- 3) It is interesting that Paul chose coveting, an act of the mind, to illustrate his point, rather than something more overt such as stealing. Although both originate in the mind, coveting (greed) can be less obvious than stealing. Coveting illustrates his point very well.

b. In this passage Paul shows that the law accomplished its purpose, namely to define violation and bring sin to the consciousness of man.

- 1) With this before us, Paul says we can see the true sinfulness of sin, and we won't mistake it as simply a minor infraction, or something which can be overcome by reformation of life, that is, by doing a better job of keeping the law.
- 2) If the Law did not have the power to bring sin to one's consciousness, sin would be dead, and the Law would be useless. Since the Law accomplished this, Paul says we firmly establish its worth. It effectively performed the function for which it was designed. See also Rom. 3:31.

c. In the passage under consideration, Paul says that the Law provided him with the knowledge of what was right and wrong. However, sin provoked him into ignoring this directive, and by violating it he became a transgressor of the Law. Therefore the Law does not justify the sinner, but it defines both righteousness and sin.

C. The use and non-use of the definite article when it occurs with the word “law.”

1. It should be noticed that sometimes the definite article appears before **νόμος** (*nomos*) “law” and at other times it does not. Three important observations can be made here. (Some languages do not use the definite article, but it is important to be aware that the Greek text uses it in a significant way.)
  - a. When the definite article is used with the word **νόμος** (*nomos*, “law”), it is frequently referring to the Law of Moses. However, the context must determine this.
  - b. At times it may be referring to civil, secular, or other kinds of religious law. Two examples are:
    - a) Rom. 8:2 speaks of “the law of the Spirit.”
    - b) Gal. 6:13 speaks of “the law of Christ.”

2. When the definite article is not used, the word **νόμος** (*nomos*, “law”) may still be speaking of the Law of Moses. Once again, context must be the guide.
  - a. Rom. 3:21 speaks of righteousness coming apart from law. The definite article is not present, but the Law of Moses is obviously in the apostle’s mind.
  - b. Rom. 3:27 also speaks of the Law of Moses although the definite article is not present.
  - c. When the definite article is not used, the word **νόμος** (*nomos*, “law”) is somewhat generic, referring to any kind of law whether secular or religious. It frequently has a dual application.
    - 1) The context may show that the Law of Moses is in the mind of the writer, but the principle is applicable in a broader sense to law in general.
    - 2) In Rom. 2:12 Paul twice uses the word **ανομῶς**, (*anomōs*) translated “without law.” This is an adverb, and therefore has no article.
    - 3) In this same verse Paul twice uses the word **νόμος** (*nomos*) translated “law.” In both of these cases the definite article is not used, but the context shows that Paul is probably referring to the Law of Moses.
    - 4) By leaving the article out, the statement becomes more generic in its meaning. These statements would then apply to those who lived prior to the giving of the Law of Moses as well as those living under the Law.
  - d. In Rom. 3:20 Paul says that observance of “law” does not bring justification. The definite article is not included here.
    - 1) This principle applies to any kind of law, but the context shows that he is speaking particularly of the Law of Moses.
    - 2) There is a principle laid down here that “law” of any kind is not the means of justification.
  3. None of this should be thought of as infringing on the importance of obedience. Instead it deals with the motivation behind the obedience. For one to seek justification by observing “law” of any kind his obedience becomes “legalism.”
  4. If obedience to “law” could bring justification, there would be no need for Christ’s sacrifice.
    - a. Our obedience to God is not to be motivated by the desire to gain his love or favor. We already have that as demonstrated in the sacrifice of Christ.
    - b. Instead, our motivation is to be rooted in our grateful response to the gift of God in the sacrifice of Christ. Then our obedience does not constitute “works of merit,” designed to gain God’s favor. It is not an “incentive” offered to God in order for us to secure his favor. Instead, our obedience

constitutes “works of gratitude” through which we express our thanksgiving for God’s grace, mercy, and love.

D. In Gal. 3:19 Paul says the Law was given as a discipline for Israel to bring them to Christ.

1. The promise to Abraham was permanent. The Law was temporarily introduced to act as a discipline for the Israelites.
2. The passage under consideration says the Law was added because of transgressions until the seed should come.
  - a. Since the Messiah would some day be introduced into the world through the nation of Israel, God gave them the Law as a guide so that the nation would be prepared to receive him.
  - b. You cannot break a law that does not exist, so in Rom. 4:15 Paul said that “where there is no law there is no transgression.”
    - 1) Before a person can be branded as a sinner, there must be a law to define right and wrong. However, there was nothing in the Law to cure sin. This was its weakness.
    - 2) From the viewpoint of law, sin is like an incurable cancer. It can be diagnosed, but the diagnosis is not a cure for the disease. Christ alone brought the cure through his death and resurrection.
    - 3) Prior to the giving of the Law of Moses, Israel was acting contrary to God’s will. However, without a law to define right and wrong, they would be unaware of the severity of their misdeeds.
    - 4) The Law of Moses was given as a guide and discipline for them in order to bring them to Christ.
  3. An important purpose of the Law was to lead Israel to seek the grace offered in Christ, for it was only through the grace (gift) of forgiveness that the devastating effects of sin could find its cure.

Conclusion:

1. The entire sacrificial system demonstrated the fact that sin is very costly. The sacrificial death of many animals was a constant reminder of this.
2. Since the “wages of sin is death,” the sinner deserved to die, but the death of animals could never remove sin (Heb. 10:4).
3. In the sacrificial system we see the integration of the demands of law, the inadequacy of law, and the need for an ultimate solution to man’s ultimate problem, sin.

## **Appendix A**

### **An Outline of the Law of Moses**

Note: The outline below has been circulated for over sixty years. The original compiler of this information is unknown, and therefore I am not able to give credit to its originator. I have edited, corrected, and reorganized portions of it, but it is basically the work of someone else.

#### **I. Historical view of its enactment.**

##### **A. Covenant at Mt. Sinai (Ex 19:4-8).**

1. The covenant was enacted on the 48th day after the Israelites left Egypt.
2. Moses was the mediator.

##### **B. Law given at Mt. Sinai.**

1. The Ten Commandments. (Ex. 20:1-17)
2. The Book of the Covenant. Enacted just after the Ten Commandments were given. (Ex. 20:21-23:33)
3. Laws given at the Tent of Meeting. (Lev. 1:1)

##### **C. Laws given during the forty years wandering.**

1. At Kadesh-barnea after the twelve spies were sent out and their report was received. Ritual statutes. (Num. 15:1-41)
2. At Kadesh-barnea after Korah's rebellion.
  - a. Law for the priestly support. (Num. 18:1-32)
  - b. Law for the cleansing from dead bodies. (Num. 19:1-22)
3. On the Plain of Moab after the Second Census. (Num. 27—30)
  - a. Law of Inheritance.
  - b. Stated burnt offerings.
  - c. Law of the vows of women.
4. On the Plain of Moab after two and half tribes were assigned. (Num. 35:9-36:13)
  - a. The law of the cities of refuge.
  - b. Addition to the law of Inheritance.

##### **D. Summary given by Moses. (Deut. 4:4—26:19)**

1. On the Plain of Moab in the 40th year, 11<sup>th</sup> month, and 1<sup>st</sup> day after their departure from Egypt.

## II. Fundamental law.

### A. The Covenant at Mt. Sinai. (Ex. 19:4-8)

1. This was a prologue to all subsequent legislation.
2. See introductory lesson.

### B. The Decalogue. (Ex. 20:1-17)

1. This was the foundation of all else in the Law of Moses.
2. The first four commandments constitute duties to God. The last six commandments constitute duties to man.
3. This is rehearsed in Deut. 5:6-21.

## III. The general law of sacrifices.

### A. Regulations which were generally common to many of the specified animal offerings. (Ex. 20:24; Lev. 1:5-15, 3:1-2, 4:3-7, 4:13-15; 17:1-9, 22:17-28)

1. Animals offered—oxen, cows, lambs, sheep, goats, doves and pigeons.
2. Condition of the animal: Each animal had to be without blemish, perfect, and not younger than 8 days.
3. The one making the offering laid his hand on the head of the animal. (Lev. 1:3-6; 3:1-2, 4:3, 13-15)
4. The blood was to be sprinkled at designated places or poured out at the base of the altar. (Lev. 1:5, 15, 4:5-7)
5. The perfection of Christ typified in the perfection of the animals. (Heb. 9:14; 1 Pet. 1:18-19).
6. Burning the fat of the animal was almost always a part of the regulation.

### B. Where Sacrifices were to be offered. (Ex. 20:25, Lev. 17:1-9, Deut. 12:4-7)

1. Before the erection of the Tabernacle offerings were to be made on an altar of earth at a place appointed by God. (Ex. 20:24)
2. After the erection of the Tabernacle, offerings were to be made at the door of the Tabernacle on the Brazen Altar. (Lev. 17:1-9)
3. When Israel settled in Canaan offerings were to be made at the door of the Tabernacle (Deut. 12:1-14). Later this was done at the Temple.
  - a. There are some difficulties concerning this since there were many sacrifices offered by God's representatives (prophets, etc.) at places other than at the Tent of Meeting, or Tabernacle.
  - b. Examples of this are:

- 1) Moses instructed Joshua to build an altar to God at Mt. Ebal when that part of Canaan was conquered. See Deut. 27:1-8. (It should be noted that it was not until Josh. 18:1 that the Tabernacle was set up after the capture of Shiloh, but the incident concerning Mt. Ebal took place in Josh. 8:30-35.)
- 2) Gideon: Jud. 6:24. "So Gideon built an altar to the Lord there and called it "The Lord is Peace. To this day it stands in Ophrah of Abiezrites."
- 3) Jephthah: Jud. 11:31.
- 4) Manoah: Jud. 13:16.
- 5) Samuel: I Sam. 16:5. (After the destruction of Shiloh.)
- 6) David: I Sam. 20:6. (After the destruction of Shiloh.)

4. Archaeological discoveries have shown that Shiloh was destroyed during the same time period as the Biblical battle of Aphek when the Ark of the Covenant was captured. This took place about 1050 B.C. See G.E. Wright, *The Westminster Historical Atlas to the Bible*, p. 46.)
5. The city of Shiloh was located about 20 miles (32.2 km) north of Jerusalem.
6. After the city of Shiloh was destroyed by the Philistines, the location of sacrifices became somewhat decentralized, as seen in I Samuel 7:7-9. However, some of the above examples show that sacrifices were made by godly men at places other than the Tabernacle, even while the Tabernacle was located in Shiloh. This is an admitted difficulty, but we do not seem to have enough historical information to offer a valid explanation.
  - a. We must remember that some of the Old Testament writers refer to a number of sources of information which they recognized as reliable, but are not found in the Old Testament canon. Some of these are:
    - 1) "The Book of Jeshar" (referred to in II Sam. 1:18).
    - 2) "The Book of the Annals of Solomon" (referred to in I Kings 11:41).
    - 3) "The Book of the Annals of the Kings of Israel" (referred to in I Kings 14:19).
    - 4) "The Book of the Annals of the Kings of Judah" (referred to in I Kings 15:7).
  - b. Answers to some of the difficulties cited above may very well have been available to the ancient Israelites, but are not now available to us.
7. The decentralization of the sacrificial system continued until the building of the Solomon's temple.

C. Various kinds and occasions of the offerings. (Ex. 29:38-41, Lev. 1—7, Num. 15:1-12, 28:1-15)

1. The burnt offering. (Ex. 29:38-43, Lev. 1:1-17, 6:8-13, Num. 28:1-15)

- a. It was completely burned.
- b. A lamb was offered every morning evening. The offerings were doubled on the Sabbath. In addition, on the first day of each month two bullocks, one lamb, and seven male lambs (Num. 28:38-42) a year old with a meal and drink offering for each.

2. Meal offering. (Lev. 2:1-16, 6:14-23)

- a. The articles of the offering: fine flour, oil, frankincense and salt. No leaven or honey.
- b. Disposal of the offering: Part was burned and part was given to the priests.
- c. When was a meal offering presented? (Num. 15:1-11). To accompany the burnt offering, vows and freewill offering or set feasts, and with various other offerings.

3. Peace Offering. This is sometime referred to as the fellowship offering. (Lev. 3:1-17, 7:11-21, 28, 34)

- a. The animal could be either male or female from the herd or flock. The fat from various organs was to be removed and burned.
- b. The meat was eaten by the person making the offering, his family, and friends. The fore-shoulder was given to Aaron and his sons; the hindquarter was given to the officiating priest.
- c. It must be eaten on the same day as offered except in the case of vows and freewill offerings. These were eaten on the first and second day. No unclean person could eat of it.
- d. Occasions of peace offerings.
  - 1) Thanksgiving to God. (Lev. 7:12-21)
  - 2) Vow or free will offering.

4. The sin offering. Many of the specifications for this offering are also applied to the guilt offering, and at times they appear to be interchangeable. (Lev. 4:1—6:7, 6:24—7:10)

- a. All the fat was burned. If blood was sprinkled in the Holy Place, all the animal had to be burned, but if the blood was sprinkled on the brazen altar, the flesh was given to the offering priest. Whatever touched the offering was holy.
- b. For sins of ignorance the anointed priest offered a bullock. The whole congregation offered a young bullock. A ruler offered a male goat. The common people offered a female goat or lamb. If a person was too poor, he could bring one turtledove or pigeon or 3 1/3 quarts (1/10 of an ephah) of fine flour.

- c. The purpose of sin and trespass offering: If the sin was against holy things, the offering was to God and if against a neighbor, the property must be restored fully and 1/5 added along with an offering to God.
- 5. The order of the offerings.
  - a. Sin offering--for atonement.
  - b. Burnt offering--for consecration.
  - c. Peace offering--for harmony and peace.
  - d. Meal offering--special occasions, and it frequently accompanied other offerings.

D. Summary of the national offerings required annually:

H. Daily Burnt Offering:	954
I. Passover:	70
J. Feast of Harvest (Pentecost):	10
K. Day of Atonement:	13
L. Feast of Tabernacles:	168
M. Feast of Trumpets:	10
N. Feast of New Moons:	<u>132</u>
<b>TOTAL ANNUAL OFFERINGS</b>	<b>1,357</b>

These numbers are approximate since there may be some overlapping of these offerings during the various feasts and other holy days.

IV. The law of the priesthood.

A. The vestments of the priests. (Ex. 28:1-43; 39:1-43)

1. The coat of linen.
2. Linen breeches.
3. Miter.
4. Girdle.
5. Blue robe, made of blue, bordered at the bottom with golden bells and pomegranates.
6. Ephod: a coat opening down the side about average length with two shoulder pieces made of onyx stones with the names of six tribes engraved on each stone.
7. Breastplate: a span square -woven from gold, blue, purple, scarlet and fine twined linen. It was suspended from the shoulders with gold chains and blue lace which held down the lower part. Twelve stones were arranged on it, each bearing a name of a tribe and inside were the Urim and Thummim.

Note: The garments of the common priests were all white. Items 1 through 4 above were for all of the priests, but the High Priest also had items 5 through 7.

B. Consecration of the Priests. (Ex. 29:1-37; Lev. 8:1-36). This is the order of consecration:

1. The priests came to the door of the Tent of Meeting and were washed with water.
2. They were then dressed in the priestly garments and anointed with oil.
3. A sin offering, (Ex. 29:10-14; Lev. 8:14-17), a burnt offering, and a peace offering were made.
4. The blood was put on the right ear, thumb and big toe of the priest, and he and his garments were sprinkled with blood.
5. After the flesh of the sacrifice had been eaten the priest was to remain the next six days at the Tent of Meeting.

C. The support of the priesthood.

1. It should be noted that the priests were not given a share of every sacrifice since it was sometimes specified just what part of particular offerings would go to him.
2. From the altar. (Lev. 7:8, Num. 18:8-20)
  - a. The skin of certain burnt offerings. (Lev. 7:8)
  - b. The waive breast and heave thigh of the peace offering. (Num. 18:11, 18)
  - c. The priest received the flesh of the animals offered, except as otherwise provided, but only those animals whose blood was not taken into the Holy Place. (Num. 18:17)
  - d. The best of the first fruits and the firstlings of the flock. (Num. 18:12).
3. A tithe of the tithe. They were to receive 1/10 of the Levites' tithe. (Num. 18:25-29)

D. The law of holiness of the priesthood. (Lev. 21—22)

1. The priest must not be defiled with a dead body. (Lev. 21:2-4)
2. He was not to shave his head or cut off the corners of his beard or to make marks upon his body. (Lev. 21:5)
3. He was not to marry a lewd or divorced woman. (Lev. 21:7)
4. If a priest's daughter became a prostitute, she was to be burned with fire. (Lev. 21:9)
5. The High Priest was not to defile himself with any dead body or profane woman. (Lev. 21:10-12)
6. Any physical blemish would prevent a man from being a priest. (Lev. 21:16-23)
7. He could not officiate when he was ceremonially unclean. (Lev. 22:4-9)
8. No one outside of the priest's family was allowed to eat holy things (such as the meat of a sacrificed animal). (See Lev. 22:10-16). Those of his family included only:

- a. The priest himself.
- b. Those born in his house or bought with his money.
- c. A priest's widowed daughter who had no child.

## V. The law of the Levites.

### A. Place of encampment and functions of the Levites. (Num. 3—4)

- 1. The Levites were to be under the direction of Aaron.
- 2. The place of Encampment of each group.
  - a. West of the Tabernacle – Gershonites (3:23).
  - b. South of the Tabernacle – Kohathites (3:29).
  - c. North of the Tabernacle – Merarites (3:35).
  - d. East, in front of the Tabernacle – Moses and Aaron and his sons. (3:38)
- 3. Their functions.
  - a. Kohathites carried furniture (3:31-32).
  - b. Gershonites carried the dry goods (3:25-26).
  - c. Merarites carried the hardware (3:36-37)

### B. Their means of support.

- 1. They received tithes from the other tribes. (Num. 18:21-24).
- 2. The tithe was given at the end of every third year. (Deut. 14:22-29).
- 3. Strangers, widows, and orphans shared in this tithe.

## VI. Ceremonial uncleanness.

### A. Uncleanness from childbirth (Lev. 12:1-8).

- 1. If a male child was born, the mother was unclean for 40 days from time of birth. A sin offering was to be offered on the 40th day--a lamb and a young pigeon or two turtle doves in place of the lamb and pigeon.
- 2. If a female child was born, the mother was unclean for 80 days from the time of birth. A sin offering as described for a male child was then to be offered.

### B. Uncleanness from infectious skin diseases. (Lev. 13:1-59).

- 1. In ancient times the word “leprosy” was used to describe a number of infectious skin diseases. Some of these healed over time, while others did not. Older translations use the term “leprosy” while the more contemporary translations use “infectious disease.” The Greek word *λεπρος* can include both, and is so used in some classical Greek literature. However, it is the primary word in Greek for the disease of leprosy.

2. Who could be affected by it? A man, a garment, or the house. (Lev. 13:2, 47, 14:34)
3. Disposal of leprosy.
  - a. The priest would decide whether it was leprosy.
  - b. A leper had to dwell alone, his clothing torn, a white cloth around his upper lip and his hair loose. When approached he had to cry out "unclean."
  - c. If a garment is infected, it had to be burned. A house had to be torn down and the rubbish taken to an unclean place. (13:45-46, 14:1-32)
3. What is to be done by the cured person? (Lev. 14:1-9).
  - a. A priest must look at him and see if he is clean.
  - b. The priest was to take two live clean birds, cedar wood, scarlet wool, and hyssop for the following ceremony.
    - 1) One bird was to be killed, and the blood collected in a vessel of running water. The other bird, the cedar wood, scarlet wool, and hyssop were all dipped in the bloody water, and sprinkled seven times on the one to be cleansed.
    - 2) The live bird was then to be released and allowed to fly away.
    - 3) The person to be cleansed had to wash his clothes, and completely bathe himself. He could then return to the camp, but had to remain outside of his tent for seven days.
    - 4) Finally, he was to shave again, wash his clothes, and completely bathe, and he was declared to be cleansed.
4. Offerings to be made to complete the process (Lev. 14:12-20).
  - a. The cleansed person offered a trespass offering, sin offering and meal offering.
  - b. Also see Mk. 1:44.

C. Uncleanliness from bodily secretions. The duration of uncleanness varied with the condition. A variety of circumstances controlled the procedures for cleansing. (Lev. 15:1-33)

D. Uncleanliness from a dead body (Num. 19:11-22).

1. Provision for this uncleanness.
  - a. A red heifer without spot and blemish taken without the camp and burned before the Priest.
  - b. Cedar wood, hyssop, and scarlet wool shall be burned with the heifer.
  - c. Water was to be poured over the ashes and sprinkled upon the person to be cleansed.

2. This is called the water of separation or the water of cleansing because it separates the things unclean.

VII. The holy days.

A. The Feast of the Passover. It is also referred to as the Feast of Unleavened Bread.

1. This feast was enacted in Egypt to be kept on the 14th day of the first month (Ex. 12:1-29, 43-51).
2. For the unclean and travelers, it was to be kept on the 14th day and the second month. However, this was used only in case of necessity. (Num. 9:1-14)
3. Additional Offerings. (Num. 28:16-25)
  - a. Two young bullock, one ram, and seven male lambs on each of the seven days in addition to the regular burnt offerings.
  - b. Deuteronomy adds that the Passover is to be kept in one place. (Deut. 16:1-8).

B. Feast of Weeks, also known as Feast of Harvest.

1. First mentioned in Exodus 23:16.
2. Fifty days from the Passover. Known as Pentecost in the New Testament. (See Lev. 23:15-22, Num. 28:26-31 and Acts 2).
3. Offerings made.
  - a. Two loaves of 1/10 of an ephah of fine flour for the first fruits.
  - b. Burnt offering of one young bullock, two rams, seven male lambs with their meal and drink offerings. One male goat as a sin offering and two lambs a year old as a sin offering.
  - c. A holy convocation was held on that day.

C. The Day of Trumpets. (Lev. 23:23-25, Num. 29:1-6)

1. When and how observed
  - a. On the first day of the 7<sup>th</sup> month, a holy day celebrated by the blowing of trumpets.
  - b. A burnt offering of one young bullock, one ram, seven male lambs with their meal and drink offerings, and one male goat as a sin offering.
  - c. The holy convocation was to be held in each town as an expression of joy.

D. The Annual Atonement. (Lev. 16:1-34, 23:26-32, Num. 29:7-11).

1. Offerings on the occasion.

- a. The High Priest offered one bullock as a sin offering and a ram as a burnt offering for himself and his family.
  - b. For the congregation the High Priest offered two male goats as a sin offering and one lamb as a burnt offering (Lev. 16:6-10).
- 2. The atonement for the High Priest and his family.
  - a. He killed the bullock of the sin offering for himself and his family, and took the censer full of live coals into the Most Holy Place.
  - b. The Mercy Seat (covering of the Ark of the Covenant), was covered with a cloud of incense. The High Priest then sprinkled the blood of the bullock seven times at the Mercy Seat. (Lev. 16:11-14).
- 3. Atonement for the people.
  - a. The goat of the sin offering was killed and its blood sprinkled upon the Mercy Seat for the sins of the people. (Lev. 16:15-19).
  - b. At this time no man was to be in the Tabernacle except Aaron (or his successor High Priest).
- 4. The disposal of the other goat.
  - a. Two goats had been selected. One was sacrificed for the people, as stated above, and the other was referred to as the scape-goat, or azazel.
  - b. The High Priest laid his hands on the head of the scape goat, and it was led away into the wilderness to a clean place and released. (Lev. 16:20-22).
- 5. Time and purpose.
  - a. The Day of Atonement is specified as a day when Israel would be “clean from all of your sins.” Lev. 16:30.
  - b. This was the only required fast day specified in the Law of Moses.
  - c. It was held on the tenth day of the seventh month.
  - d. It was a day for the nation to remember their sins. (See Lev. 16:29-34, Heb. 10: 1-3).
- 6. The extra burnt offering (Num. 29:7-11). One young bullock, one ram, and seven male lambs.

E. The Feast of Tabernacles. This was also called the Feast of Ingathering and the Feast of Booths.

- 1. It is also referred to as the Feast of Ingathering because all the crops had been gathered in by this time.
- 2. Time and mode of celebration (Lev. 23:33-36, 39-44).

- a. It began on the 15<sup>th</sup> day of the 7<sup>th</sup> month and lasted 7 days. The first and eighth days were the days of holy convocation.
- b. Works of mercy, works of necessity, and other religious observances could be done on holy days.
- c. The people dwelt in booths on the housetops, outside the gate, or in vacant spaces as a reminder of the days in the wilderness at the time of the exodus.

3. Offerings to be made (Num. 29:12-40).

- a. Thirteen, twelve, eleven, ten, nine, eight, seven, young bullocks were offered (dropped off one each day), two rams and fourteen male lambs were the daily sacrifices. One male goat was offered as a sin offering.
- b. This was the largest number of animals offered at any annual feast.

F. The Sabbath (Ex. 16:21-23, 20:8-11, Duet. 5:12-15).

- 1. No work was to be done on the Sabbath. It was to be a day of rest and holy meditation.
- 2. Note: In later Judaism the definition of work became a major issue among the Jews.
- 3. Its purpose was that the people might remember that God had brought them out of the land of Egypt (Deut. 5:12-15).

VIII. The Sacred Vows.

A. The Nazarite vow (Num. 6:1-21).

- 1. This was a vow of special consecration which involved abstinence from any product of the vine, from uncleanness from a dead body and allowing the hair to grow. (6:3-8)
- 2. When the vow was completed, specified ceremonies had to be performed.
  - a. Offer one male lamb a year old as a burnt offering.
  - b. Offer one ewe lamb a year old as a sin offering.
  - c. Offer one lamb as a peace offering and a basket of unleavened bread with a meal and drink offering.
  - d. The man who had made the vow then had to shave his head at the door of the Tabernacle and burn his hair with his peace offering.
- 3. The purpose of the vow is not completely clear, but it seems that it was a voluntary vow, taken when a man wanted to especially dedicate himself to God.

B. The vows of women (Num. 30:3-16).

1. General law of vows. (Num. 30:1-2)
2. When an individual made a vow to God, he had to keep it.

C. Redemption from vows (Lev. 27:1-34).

1. A variety of situations are laid out in the Law having to do with age and other circumstances.
  - a. From 20 to 60 years: males for 50 shekels and females for 30. (v. 3, 4)
  - b. From 5 to 20: males, 20 shekels and females 10. (v. 5)
  - c. From one month to 5 years: males, 5 shekels and females 3. (v. 6)
  - d. From 60 years upward: males, 15 shekels, females 10. (v. 7).
  - e. If a person was too poor then the priest made an estimate according to the ability to pay. (v. 8)
2. Redemption of an animal which has been vowed to God.
  - a. Clean animals could not be redeemed or exchanged. (vs. 9, 10)
  - b. Unclean animals might be redeemed by adding one-fifth of the value set by the priest. (v. 11-13)
3. In case of a house which a person had dedicated to God, the house could be redeemed by adding one-fifth to the estimate of the priest. (vs. 14, 15)
4. In case of a piece of land.
  - a. Could be redeemed by adding a fifth part of the estimation of value. (vs. 19-25)
  - b. The estimation is according to the amount of barley reaped.
5. Firstling (firstborn) which was not to be sanctified.
  - a. Since the exodus from Egypt involved the death of the firstborn in Egypt, the Law required that the first of everything, man, beast, agricultural products, etc. belonged to God. (vss. 26-27)
  - b. All devoted things belong to the Lord (vs. 28-34).

## IX. Laws concerning witchcraft and idolatry.

A. The Law against witchcraft. (Lev. 19:31, 20:6, 27)

1. Any witch or wizard shall be put to death.
2. Divination of many types is forbidden. (Deut. 18:9-13)
  - a. Passing through fire;--human sacrifice. (v. 10)

- b. Divination--claiming to find out truth in a miraculous (superstitious) ways. (v. 10)
- c. Augury--signs in animal life. (v. 10)
- d. Enchanter--one who cast spells. (v. 10)
- e. Sorcerer--one who has to do with evil spirits. (v. 10)
- f. Charmer-one who makes other people do things the charmer desires. (v. 11)
- g. Consulter with a familiar spirit—usually a departed spirit that communes with a person to give answers. (v. 11.)
- h. Wizard – practitioner of witchcraft. (v. 11)
- i. Necromancer – those who call up the dead. (v. 11)

B. Moloch worship prohibited (Lev. 20:1-5).

- 1. Moloch, the fire god, demanded that children be burned to him. This was regarded as spiritual adultery.
- 2. The special prohibition given here because of the greatness of the crime and the strength of the temptation.

C. Enticing a person to idolatry (Deut. 13:1-18).

- 1. When done by prophet (vss. 1-5). A false prophet could be proved if he pointed men to another God.
- 2. When done by relative or friend (vss. 6-11).
- 3. When a whole city is enticed (vss. 12-18).
  - a. The entire community was to execute this law.
  - b. The innocent would be spared.
  - c. Even the cattle were to be destroyed so that no motive would exist except zeal for God.

X. Articles of Animal Food.

A. Fat and blood prohibited (Lev. 7:22-27).

- 1. The fat belonged to the Lord.
- 2. The blood was to be disposed of in a variety of ways, according to the specifications of the particular sacrifice.

B. Flesh that dies a natural death could not be eaten under any condition. (Lev. 17:15-16)

C. Clean and unclean beasts (Lev. 11:1-47; Deut. 14:1-20).

- 1. Beasts. Clean beasts were those with a cloven foot and chewed the cud.
- 2. Water animals. Those which have fins and scales were clean. Others such as those which live in the mud and are scavengers were unclean.

3. Fowls. Birds of prey and those living upon dead decayed meat were unclean.
4. Winged creeping things. Clean if it hops, such as the locust.
5. Effect of touching an unclean animal. Made the person unclean.
6. Creeping things without wings must not be touched.
7. Reptiles were unclean.

## XI. Personal and Domestic Laws.

### A. Laws of dress.

1. Could not wear clothing of mixed material. This would prevent the chance of cheating and prevent making shoddy goods. (Lev. 19:19)
2. Fringes (Num. 15:37-40). The fringes were used to bring to their remembrance God's commandments.
3. The dress of the other sex (Deut. 22:5). No woman could wear a man's clothing; neither could a man dress as a woman.

### B. Personal disfigurement. Individuals must not disfigure the body for this a custom to idolatry. Lev. 19:27-28

## XII. Ethical Precepts.

- A. Love of truth. Ex.. 23:1, 2, 7, Lev. 19:16.
- B. Inflexible justice. Ex. 23:3-6, 3, Lev. 19:15.
- C. Kindness to strangers. Ex. 23:9, Lev. 19:33-34
- D. Kindness to enemies. Ex. 23:4-5, Lev. 19:17-18.
- E. Treatment of the blind and deaf. Lev. 19:14. 16.
- F. Honor to the aged. Lev. 19:32.
- G. Just weights and measures. Lev. 19:35-36, Deut. 25:13-15.
- H. What to do with animals astray or lost articles which were found. Deut. 22:1-4.
- I. Kindness to mother birds. Deut. 22:6-7.
- J. Battlements on the roof of safety. Deut. 22:8.
- K. Yoking an ox and ass. Deut. 22:10.
- L. Muzzling. Deut. 25:4

## XIII. The Civil Code. Marriage and Sexual relations.

### A. Sexual relations.

1. Unlawful marriage and sexual relationships. Lev. 18:1-18; 20:11-21.
2. Prohibited relationships. Marriage was prohibited with anybody closer than a first cousin.
3. Penalties for incest. 20:11-21.
  - a. There are many prohibitions concerning marriage to a near relative, or sexual relationships between close family members.

- b. It is not clear just how close the “close relative” was considered, but it is usually thought of as first cousins.

B. Unlawful sexual intercourse.

- 1. With a woman in uncleanness – monthly period.. Lev. 18:19, 20:18.
- 2. Adultery. Lev. 19:20-22; Deut. 22:22-24. Penalty was death.
- 3. Rape. Deut. 22:25-29.
  - a. For a woman who was betrothed, death for the man.
  - b. For a woman riot betrothed, the woman’s father was paid fifty shekels and the man was required to marry the woman.
- 4. Prostitution, both male and female. Lev. 21:9, Deut. 23:17
- 5. Bestiality. Penalty--both the man and the beast shall be killed. Lev. 20:15-16
- 6. Sodomy. Both men were to be killed. Lev. 20:13.

C. Lawful marriages.

- 1. Lawful marriage took place where none of the prohibitions were violated.
- 2. A captive woman could be married when she mourned her parents one month shaving her head and paring her nails. Deut. 21:10-14.
- 3. A brother’s widow was to be married to the brother and children should be raised up to the dead brother.
  - a. Penalty if the brother did not do this. The woman would appear before the elders and before the man, and loose his shoe and spit in his face.
  - b. Thus he would be branded as the man who had his shoe loosed. Deut. 25:5-10.

D. The Law of jealousy.

- 1. A wife suspected of adultery. Num. 5:11-31.
- 2. A bride suspected of fornication. Deut. 22:13-21
  - a. If the tokens of her virginity are shown, her husband shall be chastised and compelled to live with her having paid a fine of 100 shekels, and he can never divorce her.
  - b. If she is guilty she shall be stoned.
- 3. Eunuchs and illegitimates. These were forbidden in the congregation of the people. Deut. 23:1-2.

E. Divorce. Deut. 24:1-4

- 1. A writing of divorce was permitted.

2. Limit to the right of divorce.
  - a. If a husband accused his wife of not being a virgin, when he married her, but the charge is proved to be false, he can never divorce her. Deut. 22:13-21
  - b. Mistreating a virgin. Deut. 22:23-29
3. This easy divorce was permitted on account of the hardness of their hearts. See Matt. 19:3-9.

#### XIV. The Law of Inheritance.

- A. The general law and its origin. Num. 27:1-11
  1. The oldest son had the right to inherit a double portion. Deut. 21:15-17. The law could not be altered by will.
  2. If there were no sons in the family, the property would pass to the daughter. If no daughters, to the brothers. If no brothers or daughters, the property went to his father's brothers or to the nearest kin.
- B. Land was not to pass from tribe to tribe, but each tribe was to keep its own land.

#### XV. Miscellaneous provisions of the Law.

- A. Other provisions. Lev. 19, Deut. 23:15—25:19.
  1. Usury forbidden. Lev. 25:35-38; Deut. 23:19-20.
    - a. The poor would not be exploited
    - b. Foreigners could be charged usury.
  2. The law of pledges. Ex. 22:26, 27, Deut. 24:6, 10-13, 17.
    - a. A garment taken as a pledge had to be returned before sunset.
    - b. No millstone could be taken as a pledge.
    - c. One could not enter his neighbor's house to get the pledge.
    - d. No injustice could be done to the stranger, the fatherless or the widow.
  3. The law of gleaning. Deut. 24:19-22, Lev. 19:9
    - a. The corners of a field were not to be cut, and things dropped in harvest could not be picked up.
    - b. The poor could glean the corners.
- B. The Sabbatical Year. Ex. 23:10-11, Lev. 25:1-7.

1. This provided for six years of cultivation and required that land be left uncultivated on the 7<sup>th</sup> year to allow the land to rest.
2. Other provisions. Deut. 15:1-11.
  - a. All debts were cancelled.
  - b. This would take care of the suffering poor.

C. The Year of Jubilee. Lev. 25:8-55.

1. The 50<sup>th</sup> year was referred to as the Year of Jubilee.
  - a. Liberty was proclaimed throughout the entire land.
  - b. The sounding of the trumpet on the Day of Atonement ushered in this year.
2. All land was returned to its original owner.
3. God promised they would have plenty for the three years. These were the Sabbatical year, the Year of Jubilee, and the time until harvest of the next year. Lev. 25:18-22
4. The right of redemption of lands and houses.
  - a. At the Jubilee the lands should be returned to the rightful owner.
  - b. The houses could be redeemed at any time within a year.
5. At any time slaves could be set free by redemption, but in the Year of Jubilee slaves would be automatically free.

## XVI. The Law of Servitude.

A. As given in the book of the Covenant. Ex. 21:2-11, 16, 20, 21

1. The rights of the Hebrew bondmen.
  - a. A slave could serve six years, but on the 7th he went free.
  - b. His wife and children belonged to the master unless they were taken into bondage when he was taken. Then they could go out when he went.
  - c. If the slaves desired to continue his service, his master was to bring him to the Tent of Meeting and bore his ear with an awl then he would serve his master for life.
2. The rights of Hebrew bondwomen. Ex. 21:7-11, Deut. 15:12-17.
  - a. A man could sell his daughter into slavery, but if she married she was set free.

- b. A Hebrew woman was to work for six years, and would receive her freedom in the seventh year. She was to be furnished liberally out of the flock, grain and wine.
- 3. Kidnapping. The penalty was death. Ex. 21:16, Deut. 24:7.
- 4. Killing a slave by chastising him. Ex. 21:20-21.
  - a. If a slave was killed outright the master was to be punished.
  - b. If the slave lived a day or two and died the master was unpunished because this would show that he had not intended murder.

B. Other Rights of Hebrew slaves. Lev. 25:35-55.

- 1. A man sold on account of poverty was not to be regarded as a slave but as a hired servant and was not to be ruled over with rigor. He was to serve until the Year of Jubilee or until his seven years were completed, whichever came first. Ex. 21:1-6.
- 2. Permanent slaves. Lev. 25:44-40.
  - a. These could only be foreigners, not of Hebrew blood.
  - b. These could be chastised, but Hebrew slaves could not be chastised.
- 3. Rights of a Hebrew sold to a foreigner.
  - a. They may be redeemed by another Hebrew after they were sold.
  - b. The price of redemption was set according to the time he had worked until the year of Jubilee.

C. Provisions made for freed men. Deut. 15:12-18.

- 1. When a man was set free he was to be furnished liberally out of the flock and possessions of his master.
- 2. Those released at the Year of Jubilee needed nothing because the fields and orchards were opened to them.

D. Rights of foreign bondmen.

- 1. Protection of life and limb. Ex. 21:20, 21, 26, 28.
- 2. If a person died by chastising, the master was to be punished.
- 3. If any part of his body had been injured the slave could go free.
- 4. There was to be no release of foreign slaves. Lev. 25:44, 46.
- 5. No fugitive was to be returned, but he could live in the place he chose to live. Deut. 23:15-16

XVII. Miscellaneous crimes and punishments.

A. Capital Crimes.

1. Murder. Ex. 21:12-14, II Kings 1:50, 2:28, Lev. 24:17.
  - a. The penalty for first degree murder was death.
  - b. Second degree murder would be avenged by a member of the family.
  - c. More than one witness was necessary for conviction. Num. 35:30, Deut. 17:6, Heb. 10:28-29.
2. Murder by vicious animal. Ex. 21:20-32.
  - a. The animal was to be killed and the owner had to pay a penalty.
  - b. If the animal had been vicious in the past, and this had been reported to its owner, but the owner took no action, the owner was put to death as well as the animal.
3. Kidnapping. The penalty for kidnapping was death. Ex. 21:16; Deut. 24:7.
4. Idolatry. Penalty is death. Deut. 13:1-18.
5. Blasphemy. Penalty is death by stoning. Lev. 24:10-16.
6. False Prophesying. Deut. 18:20-22; cf. I Kings 18:40.
7. Witchcraft. Penalty is death. Lev. 20:27.
8. Rape of betrothed or married woman. Deut. 22:23-29.
  - a. If the rape took place in the city and the woman did not cry out, the penalty was death of both parties.
  - b. If the rape took place in the countryside, the penalty was death for the man.
9. Adultery. .Penalty, death for both parties Deut. 22:22. See also John 8:1-11.
10. Prostitution. Penalty, death by burning. Deut. 22:13-21; Lev. 21:9
11. Incest. Penalty, death by fire for both parties. Lev. 20:11, 12, 14.
12. Sodomy. Penalty, death for both parties. Lev. 20:13.
13. Bestiality. Penalty, death for both man and beast. Lev. 20:15-16.
14. Smiting or cursing a parent. Penalty, death Lev. 21:15, 17.
15. Stubborn rebellion against a father. Penalty, the rebellious child was to be brought before the elders and having been accused by his father shall be stoned to death. Deut. 21:18-21.
16. Rebellion against the judges. The man who refuses to abide by the judgments of the priests and Levites was to be put to death. Deut. 17:8-13.
17. False testimony which cost a man his life. Penalty, death. Deut. 19:16-21.

B. Manslaughter. This is distinguished from murder if the killing was accidental.

1. The six cities of refuge. Num. 35:9-15, Deut. 19:1-13.

2. These cities in Canaan offered refuge from the avenger of blood (family member of the one who was killed). There were three on each side of the Jordan River. The Levites inhabited these cities.
3. A guilty man had a hearing, and if the death was judged accidental, the offender had to remain in that city until the death of the High Priest. If however, the avenger of blood found the offender outside of the city of refuge, he could kill him, or if he overtook the offender before he reached one of the cities of refuge he could kill him.

C. Maiming. The general law for maiming was and eye for an eye, and a tooth for a tooth.

1. If a man was disabled by an attacker using a stone or a fist, the disabled man was to be paid for the loss of his time and for the means of healing. Ex. 21:18, 19, 22-27, Lev. 24:17-22.
2. Injuring a pregnant woman.
  - a. If no harm comes the guilty party shall pay what the judges determine.
  - b. It shall be eye for eye and tooth for tooth.
3. Maiming of a slave. The slave is to be set free.

D. Other crimes and penalties. See Ex. 22:1-15, Num. 35:31-34, Deut. 19:14, 21:1-9, 25:1-3.

1. Theft.
  - a. For an ox stolen the thief must restore five oxen. For a sheep, the thief must restore four sheep.
  - b. If the thief is caught with the stolen goods, he must restore double.
  - c. The thief can be sold for his theft if he fails to make restitution.
2. Breach of trust. Restitution must be made. Ex. 22:7-15
3. Trespass by a beast or by fire. Restitution shall be made. Ex. 22:5, 6
4. Removing landmarks. Deut. 19:14
5. The limit of scourging. Deut. 25:1-3
  - a. Scourging was allowed for any crime where another penalty was not mentioned.
  - b. The limit was 40 stripes.
  - c. The actual number was 39 for fear that they might make a mistake. See II Cor. 11:24.
6. Inquest over a dead body. Deut. 21:1-9.

- a. If a person was found slain and no one knew the slayer, the judges and elders were to measure the distance to the surrounding cities and the elders of the nearest city were to bring a heifer to a rough valley and strike off its head.
- b. The elders next to the slain person were to wash their hands over the heifer and say, "Our hands have not shed this, neither have I seen it."

7. Certain circumstances could not be pardoned. Num. 35:31-34.

## XVII. Military and Judicial Laws.

- A. Exemption from military service. Deut. 20:1-9, 24:5
  1. A person who had just married was exempt from military service for one year.
  2. A coward was exempt from military service.
  3. These were exempt because of the possible effects upon the morale of the army.
- B. Conduct of Sieges. Deut. 20:10-20.
  1. Those who resisted were to be slain.
  2. The fruit trees were to be spared because of their use.
- C. Treaties with the Canaanites were forbidden. Deut. 7:1-5.
- D. The Judiciary. Deut. 16:18-20; 17:8-13.
  1. City judges were to be appointed by the people, and they were to judge in local affairs.
  2. The judge could make an appeal to the higher court if needed.
- E. Laws concerning the king.
  1. No foreigner could be a king for the king must be chosen by God.
  2. Regal splendor was forbidden. Deut. 17:15, 17.
  3. Law governing the king. Deut. 17:18-20.
  4. The king must keep the law and follow its prescription.

## Appendix B

### THE ANNUAL CALENDAR

Sacred year	Hebrew months	Civil year	Modern equivalent	Babylonian month	Farm season
1	Abib (Nisan) 1—New Moon 14—Passover 15—Sabbath— holy convocation 16—week of un- leavened bread	7	March/Apri 1	Nisanu	Later spring Rain and the beginning of the barley har- vest
2	Iyyar (Ziv) 1—New Moon	8	April/May	Aiaru	barley harvest
3	Sivan 1—New Moon 6-7 Feast of Weeks	9	May/June	Simanu	wheat harvest
4	Tammuz 1—New Moon	10	June/July	Duzu	
5	Ab 1—New Moon	11	July/Aug.	Abu	figs and olives ripen
6	Elul 1—New Moon	12	Aug./Sept.	Ululu	vintage season
7	Tishri (Ethanim) 1—New Moon New Year's Day Feast of Trumpets 10—Day of Atonement 15-22 Feast of Tabernacles	1	Sept./Oct.	Tashritu	former early rains plowing time
8	Heshvan 1—New Moon	2	Oct./Nov.	Arahsamnu	seeding time for wheat and barley
9	Kislev (Chislev) 1—New Moon	3	Nov./Dec.	Kislimu	
10	Tebeth	4	Dec./Jan.	Tebetu	
11	Shebat	5	Jan./Feb.	Shabatu	
12	Adar	6	Feb./March	Addaru	almond trees blossom

Chart is from Samuel J. Schultz, *The Old Testament Speaks*. Harper & Row, Publishers, New York: 1970, p. 56.

## Appendix C

### Chart of Weights and Measures

Biblical Unit		Approximate American Equivalent	Approximate Metric Equivalent
<b>WEIGHTS</b>			
talent	(60 minas)	75 pounds	34.0 kilograms
mina	(50 shekels)	1 1/4 pounds	0.6 kilogram
shekel	(2 bekas)	2/5 ounce	11.5 grams
pim	(2/3 shekel)	1/3 ounce	7.6 grams
beka	(10 gerahs)	1/5 ounce	5.5 grams
gerah		1/50 ounce	0.6 gram
<b>LENGTH</b>			
cubit		18 inches	0.5 meter
span		9 inches	23 centimeters
handbreadth		3 inches	8 centimeters
<b>CAPACITY Dry Measure</b>			
cor [homer]	(10 ephahs)	6 bushels	220 liters
lethek	(5 ephahs)	3 bushels	110 liters
ephah	(10 omers)	3/5 bushel	22 liters
seah	(1/3 ephah)	7 quarts	7.3 liters
omer	(1/10 ephah)	2 quarts	2 liters
cab	(1/18 ephah)	1 quart	1 liter
<b>LIQUID MEASURE</b>			
bath	(1 ephah)	6 gallons	22 liters
hin	(1/6 bath)	4 quarts	4 liters
log	(1/72 bath)	1/3 quart	0.3 liter

The figures of the table are calculated on the basis of a shekel equaling 11.5 grams, a cubit equaling 18 inches and an ephah equaling 22 liters. The quart referred to is either a dry quart (slightly larger than a liter) or a liquid quart (slightly smaller than a liter), whichever is applicable. The ton referred to in the footnotes is the American ton of 2,000 pounds.

This table is based upon the best available information, but it is not intended to be mathematically precise; it merely gives approximate amounts and distances. Weights and measures differed somewhat at various times and places in the ancient world. There is uncertainty particularly about the ephah and the bath; further discoveries may give more light on these units of capacity.

(Source: *The NIV Study Bible*, Zondervan Publishing Company, Grand Rapids, p. 1953.)

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